THE GREATEST SINNERS EXHORTED and ENCOURAGED To Come to CHRIST, and that NOW, Without DELAYING.

Also, The Exceeding *Danger* of men's *Deferring their* REPENTANCE.

Together with a *Discourse* about *The* DAY of JUDGEMENT. And on *Several other* Subjects.

By INCREASE MATHER Teacher of a Church at *Boston* in *N. England*.

Eccles. 12. 13. *Let us hear the Conclusion of the whole matter, fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the* Whole duty of Man.

Act. 20. 21. *Testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks,* Repentance *toward God, and Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*

BOSTON in *N. E.* Printed by *R. P.* for *James Brunning* at his Shop near the *Exchange*. 16[illegible]

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[illegible] MATHER

Teacher of a Church at Boston in N. England.

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To the Reader.

IT *is, as the Practice, ſo the Duty of every Scribe which is inſtructed to the Kingdom of God, to bring forth things both* New *and* Old. *The* Law *muſt be preached, inaſmuch as thereby is the* Knowledge of Sin, *without which men will never be duly ſenſible of their need of* Chriſt. *But it is the* Goſpel (*and not the Law*) *which is* the word of Faith. *Sinners will never come to Chriſt except they be perſwaded of His* Ability *and* Willingneſs *to ſave. This the Goſpel doth make known, as alſo that the gracious God is ready for His Son's ſake, to pardon all thoſe that truly repent,* tho their ſins are as Scarlet, though they be red like Crimſon. *The Holy Spirit doth ſometimes bleſs* encouraging *ſometimes* awakning *Conſiderations*

for

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for saving good to the souls of the Elect of God. Nothing hath a greater tendency to awaken unto Repentance than serious Thoughts about the great DAY of JUDGMENT, and the Infinite Danger which is in mens Delaying their Conversion. A late Writer saith that he had enquired of some whose Ministry had been eminently blessed as to Converting work; and They assured him, that they found greater success in preaching about the Danger of Deferring Repentance, than in their Discourses on any other Subjects. What can be more desirable than that such as are indeed brought home to Christ, should be abundantly fruitful in good works, and grow into greater Intimacies of Communion with God? Such Considerations as these have induced me first to preach, and now to consent to the Publication of the Sermons emitted herewith.

There are Thousands in the world better than I am, Whose Opportunities for Service are taken from them: If a great door and effectual is as yet opened to me, all that know my Circumstances will say I ought to thank God, and not the world. I must and do (not altogether without shame and Sorrow for my want of wisdome to improve them) acknowledge that the

Lord

Lord Jesus hath entrusted mee for many years with rich Opportunities more wayes than one; But how soon they may be all gone I know not. That Satan and his Instruments have been designing to deprive mee of them, is manifest from that foolish and Treasonable Letter *pretended to be written at* Boston *in* N. E. *3d. of* 10th. M. 1683. *whereunto my name is most injuriously affixed: which* Letter *was Published in* Barbadoes, *and part of it Printed by* Le Strange *in his* Observators *Novemb.* 26, 27. *and Decemb.* 1. 1684. *as if it had been really mine, whenas* I never wrote so much as one Line of it, nor had any more hand in the Composure of it than the *Observator* himself had. *I find in the History of* Shamplots, pag. 16 *that some of farr greater worth than I am have suffered the like abuses.* Dr. Owen, *Mr.* Baxter, *Dr.* Conant *and others had* Treasonable Letters *imposed on them by wicked men. Who am I, that I should not bear such wrongs with Patience? Hitherto I have not published any thing for my* Vindication, *and it was in my thoughts never to have done it, but to have left all to the Discoveries of* the great DAY, *in the mean time being mindful of the old Saying,* Magnum Contumeliæ remedium Negligentia

Negligentia. *But having been informed that some have made an ill use of my* Silence, *I thought it my Duty to take this occasion to notifie to the world what I have now declared.*

I cannot but see my self concerned to Redeem the Time, *and in all wayes wherein I am capable, to be doing for Christ, whilest it is Day.*

INCREASE MATHER.

Boston, in N. E.
Feb. 24. 168$\frac{5}{6}$.

John 6. 37.

—— And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.

IN this Chapter, we have the ſacred Story of Chriſt's feeding five Thouſand men with five Loaves and two Fiſhes, together with the Conſequents of that Miracle. One Effect of it was, that many followed Chriſt, hoping that He would have fed them again in a way *extraordinary*. The Lord Chriſt did reprehend them for their vanity, in deſiring to live an idle life, and then hoping that they ſhould be fed by Miracle. He alſo took occaſion to exhort them to labour after meat for their ſouls: He does therefore ſet forth the excellency of ſpiritual bread, ſhewing how much it does tranſcend the Manna which the Children of Iſrael lived upon in the Wil-

Wilderneſs; thereupon the *Jews* deſired that they might alwayes feed upon that bread *ver.* 34. *Then ſaid they to Him, Lord evermore give us this bread.* It is evident that they had carnal imaginations in their minds ſtill, dreaming of bread for their bodies, which might cauſe them to live a long time in this world. Therefore in anſwer to that requeſt of theirs, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt does both inform and reprove them.

1. He informs them, What that Bread of life which He ſpake of, is, and what it is to eat thereof, *viz.* that He Himſelf is that Bread, and that to beleeve on Him, is to eat thereof, *ver.* 35.

2. He reproveth them for their Unbelief, *ver.* 36. *But I ſay unto you, that you alſo have ſeen me and beleeve not.* They had ſeen Chriſt with bodily eyes, and they had ſeen his *Miracles* too, and yet they had not ſeen Him with an eye of Faith; they did not cloſe with Him as the true *Meſſiah*, as the Son of God, and the Saviour of the World.

In this verſe there are two things aſſerted,

1. The Reaſon why ſome that have the outward means of Faith, yet never beleeve. It is becauſe they are not by the Father given to Chriſt. All *ſuch* ſhall *firſt* or *laſt* believe on Him.

But.

But if men be not given to Christ, let them hear never such sermons preached, nay, tho never such Miracles should be wrought before their eyes, they will not beleeve.

2. Another thing asserted in this verse, is, the great benefit which does follow upon coming to Christ, as in the words before us to insist on; the meaning of which may be spoken unto under the *Doctrine* from them, which is,

Doct. *That if any man, whoever he be, shall indeed come unto Jesus Christ, He will in no wise cast him out.*

For the clearing of this Doctrine, three things may be enquired into,

1. Who are Comers unto Christ.

2. What is imply'd in this expression, that *Christ will in no wise cast him out that comes unto Him.*

3. How it does appear that Christ will in no wise doe so.

Quest. 1. *Who are Comers to Christ?* or *what is meant by coming to Him?*

Answ. *The Comer to Christ is the same with the Beleever.* In the thirty fifth verse of the Chapter, Christ saith *He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.* So in *ver.* 44, 45, 65, Believing on Christ, is called a coming to Him. There

are various Metaphors whereby Faith is set forth in the Scripture: There is the *Eye* of Faith, hence Beleeving is called a *Looking* on Christ *Zech.* 12. 10. There is the *Ear* of Faith, so Beleeving is called *Hearing*; *Hear and your souls shall live.* there is the *Mouth* of Faith, thus Beleeving is expressed by that of *eating* Christ, *Joh.* 6. 57. *He that* eateth *me shall live by me.* There is the *Hand* of Faith, thence Beleeving is said to be a *Receiving* of Christ, *Joh.* 1. 12. And there is the *Foot* of Faith, thence Beleeving *on* Christ is said to be a Going *to* him and Coming *to* him: As *Un*beliefe is expressed by that of *not* coming to Him *Joh.* 5. 40. *Ye will not come to me that you might have life. i. e.* you will not *beleive.* And Unbeleif is said to be a Departing from the Lord, *Heb.* 3. 12. so Faith is Coming to Him; Not a meer *bodily* Coming to Christ, for so these *Capernaits* and many others came to him, who had no true faith; but a coming to him with the *Soul.* The Gospel calls upon men to forsake all for Christ, he whose heart and soul does obey that Call is a true Believer. Particularly,

1. The Believer *Cometh to Christ as the most excellent Person his soul can desire.* 1. *Pet* 2. 7. *To you that believe He is precious.* The Jews follow-

followed Christ for his Loaves, and not for his Person, *Joh.* 6. 26. Notwithstanding the Miracles done by Christ, which were enough to convince any one that he is the Son of God; yet they did not beleeve Him to be so, and therefore were not right Followers *of* him, or Comers *to* Him. When God brings a man home to Christ, He lets him see that surpassing Excellency in his Person, as to cause the soul to fall in love with Him, and to choose Christ rather than any other person. *Cant.* 5. 9, 10, 16. *What is thy beloved more than anothers beloved? my beloved is the chiefest among ten thousand, yea he is altogether lovely.* This is the Language of the real comer to Christ. The beleeving soul seeth Christ to be a lovely Christ indeed, and therefore cometh *to* Him as being enamoured *with* Him. *Joh.* 6. 40. *He that seeth the Son and beleeveth on him.* Men must *see* a beauty and excellency in the Son of God, or they will not beleeve on Him.

2. The Beleever *cometh to Christ for Salvation.* He seeth that Christ is in himself *lovely*; and from that consideration goeth to Him. Moreover, he seeth all that life and Salvation in Christ which his soul stands in need of, and therefore cometh to Him. It's true (as was intimated) that in closing with Christ, respect is to be had to His Person, and not to His be-

benefits only. Nevertheleſs a man in Coming to Chriſt *may* and ſhould have reſpect to his own Salvation. It is a very needleſs ſcruple which ſome have concerning their Coming to Chriſt, as if it were not right, becauſe *Deſire of Salvation puts them upon it*; ſo it *may* be, and ſo it *ſhould* be. Chriſt Himſelf calls upon men from that very Conſideration to come unto Him. *Joh.* 7. 37. *If any man thirſt let him come unto me and drink.* A man *may* and *ſhould* come to Chriſt that ſo he may drink, that he may *from* and *by* Chriſt receive the waters of life for his ſoul. The Believer cometh to Chriſt as to a Prieſt, who has by the Sacrifice of himſelf purchaſed life for every comer to him. He looketh for Reconciliation with God only by the Sacrifice which Chriſt has offer'd for that end: He caſts his ſoul and all the eternal Concerns thereof, upon the Merit and Mediation of Jeſus Chriſt. He looketh for all Acceptance with God, for the Pardon of all ſins, for eternal life in another world, for the alone ſake of Chriſt and *His* Righteouſneſs; thus does he come to Him.

3. The Beleever *cometh to Chriſt to be* Inſtructed *by Him.* Unto this the words of my Text have a peculiar reſpect. *He that cometh to me* (ſaith Chriſt) *h. e.* he that cometh to

me

me to be my Scholar, my Disciple, as long as he is really willing to learn of me, I will not turn him out of doors. When the woman of *Samaria* acquainted the Citizens that she had met with one who told her all things that ever she did, they went out of the City and came to Him. Thus 'tis with the Beleever; he has heard report of Christ's being the great Prophet of God, and therefore he cometh to Him for instruction: he believes that Christ knowes the mind of God *fully*, and he is willing that Christ should reveal unto him whatever God would have him to beleeve or to practise in order to Salvation. His soul thirsteth after the wholsome waters of Truth, and he comes to Christ that he may receive thereof. *Isa.* 55. 1. This then is implyed in *Coming* to Christ, even a Closing with Him in respect of His *prophetical* Office, a being subject to the Teachings of His Word and Spirit.

4. A Beleever *cometh to Christ to be* ruled *by him.* Many are ready to declare their willingness to have Christ to be their Saviour, who have no mind to have Him to be their *Ruler*; They do not desire to be under the strict and holy Government of Christ, whereas true Faith implies a closing with Christ in respect of his *Kingly* Office. Hence tis expressed by that of *receiving Christ Jesus the* Lord. *Col.* 2. 6.

He that cometh to Christ with an unfeigned desire to be His Servant, and a Resolution to comply with all His holy commands, is such a Comer to Him as He will in no wise cast out. *Luk.* 6. 46. *Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings and doeth them.* Hence beleevers are styled the Servants of Christ. 1. *Cor.* 2. 22. *Gal,* 1. 10. There is a Covenant between Christ and them, as there is a Covenant between Master and Servant. Beleevers are under a Promise, yea, an *Oath* of Fidelity to Christ, to be *His*, and *His only*, and *His forever.*

We proceed therefore to the *second* Inquiry, *VIZ.*

Quest. 2. *What is implyed in this Expression, that Christ will in no wise cast him out that comes to Him?*

Answ. *There is more implyed than is plainly expressed in these words.* Tho the expression is negative, yet positive Good is conteined therein. In general when it is said *I will in no wise cast him out*, the meaning is, I will give him all the kind entertainment which his soul can desire. He shall have all the Good which a Disciple of Christ can expect.

More particularly,

1. *He that comes to Christ, the Lord Jesus will* reconcile *him to God.* He undertaketh for any

any man, for every man that ſhall come to Him, to make his peace with God. Suppoſe a ſinner to have been guilty of never ſo many Crimes and Provocations, if he cometh to Chriſt, He will bring him into God's Favour: For He has by his death made Atonement for ſins, and obtained Reconciliation for Sinners; and whoever cometh to Him, has an Intereſt in all the Mercy purchaſed by His Death. And Chriſt by his Interceſſion does commend the Comer to Him, unto the Favour of God. He ſaith before God the Father, This ſinner is one of them that I dyed for, and therefore do Thou for my ſake forgive all his Sins, and be reconciled to his ſoul.

2, *If men come to Chriſt, He will accept them under His Inſtruction.* He will not refuſe to admit them into His School, He will in no wiſe ſhut the doors of His Houſe againſt them in that reſpect. Therefore He ſaith, *Come to me and* learn. *Mat.* 11. 28, 29. They that come to Him, He will learn them. Chriſt ſpeaketh by *David*, ſaying, *come to me, you Children, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord.* Pſal. 34. 11. It is a bleſſed thing to be received into Chriſt's School, to become the Diſciple of ſuch a Maſter, the Scholar of ſuch a Teacher; yet this bleſſedneſs belongs to every one that cometh to Chriſt. Hence Wiſ-

dome

Wisdome speaketh as *Prov.* 8. 32. *Hearken to me O ye Children, for blessed are they that keep my wayes, hear Instruction and be wise, and refuse it not, blessed is the man that heareth me, watching dayly at my gates, waiting at the posts, of my doors.* They that come to Christ with A sincere desire to be instructed by Him, He will teach them all things which are needful for them to know in order to Life and Salvation. 1. *Joh.* 2. 20.

3. *If men come to Christ, He will take them under His Protection.* They that have a true desire to be His subjects, and to have their souls secured under the wings of His Power, it shall be so. He will gather them under *His wings*, Mat. 23, 37. He will defend them against the Birds of prey which seek to devour their souls. When once a man is in the armes of Christ, his soul is safe for ever; let Sin, Satan, Earth, *Hell*, do the worst they can. Hence Beleevers are said to be *preserved in Christ Jesus.* Jude. 1. As the Children of Israel having the bloud of the *Paschal Lamb* sprinkled over their doors, were preserved, when the destroying Angel killed the *Egyptians*; so they that are in Christ, are in *Him* preserved from eternal destruction. Christ is a Protector to them that resort unto Him. When *Abiather* came to *David*, he said to him

him, *Abide thou with me, fear not, with me thou ſhalt be in ſafeguard.* 1. Sam. 22. 23. They that fled to *David* were ſafe from the fury of *Saul*; ſo they that come to Chriſt, are ſafe from the rage of Satan, who does perſecute their ſouls.

4. *They that come to Chriſt, He will never caſt them out of his favour, but bring them ſafe to Heaven at laſt.* Hence Chriſt does not only ſay, I will not caſt him out that comes to me, but I will *in no wiſe* do it. In the *Greek* there are 2 *Negatives*, *Caſt him out* that comes to *me?* (ſaith Chriſt) *no*, I will *never* do it. Therefore He ſaith of his ſheep which hear his voice, and follow him, *I will give unto them eternal life, and they ſhall never periſh*, Joh. 10. 28. Nothing can ever alienate his mind and heart from them tho he ſeeth a great deal of weakneſs & frowardneſs in them, yet as long as they have a heart to cleave to him he will never reject them. *Joh.* 13. 1, *Jeſus. having loved his own in the world, He loved them to the* end. He has made an *everlaſting* Covenant with the Comer to him. *Iſai.* 55. 3. And therefore he wlll in no wiſe ſhut the door of Heaven againſt any ſuch If a man come to him, he will never caſt him out of Paradiſe. To him that overcometh all Temptations and objections

Objections againſt coming to Chriſt, *to him will he give to eat of the tree of Life, which is in the midſt of the Paradiſe of God.*

Queſt. 3. *But how does it appear that Chriſt will in no wiſe caſt him out that cometh to him?*

Anſw. 1. *If Chriſt ſhould caſt any out that come to him, he ſhould act contrary to the will of his Father*, which he never did, and we may beſure he never will do. If a man cometh to Chriſt, it is the Father that draweth him. *Joh.* 6. 44. *No man can come to me except the* Father *which hath ſent me draw him.* Now if when a ſoul cometh to Chriſt, he ſhould be rejected by him, the Father would draw one way and Chriſt draw another way, which can not be. Chriſt ſpeaking to God the Father, ſaith, *Thou and I, we are one, Joh.* 17. 22. The Father, and Chriſt as Mediatour are one in reſpect of Will and Deſign; they both will and deſign the ſame thing. Therefore Chriſt himſelf does by this Argument prove that he will not caſt him out that cometh to him Wherefore in the next words he ſayth, *For I came down from Heaven not to doe mine owne Will, but the Will of him that ſent me. and this is the Fathers Will which hath ſent me, that of all which he hath given me, I ſhould loſe nothing.* If Chriſt came into the world to do the Will

Will of God, and this be the Will of God, that he ſhould not loſe ſo much as one of them that are given to him; we may conclude, that no Comer *to* him, ſhall be rejected *by* him.

2. *The Grace of the Lord Jeſus, the goodneſs of his nature is ſuch, as that he will in no wiſe caſt out them that come to him.* He is of a moſt gracious Diſpoſition, and therefore ready to accept of returning ſinners *Joel* 2. 13. *Turn ye unto the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful.* Hence if the greateſt ſinners in the world ſhould come unto the Lord Jeſus with an heart really deſirous to be his Diſciples, he will not caſt them out. *Paul* before his Converſion had bin a Blaſphemer & a Perſecutor of Chriſt & his Church, and very injurious both to God and man, yet when he was brought to ſubmit himſelf unto Chriſt, and to ſay, *Lord what wilt thou have me to do*, the Lord would in no wiſe caſt him out. why? *The Grace of our Lord* (i. e. of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt) *was exceeding abundant.* 1. *Tim.* 1. 13. 14. There is Grace and abundant Grace, yea *exceeding* abundant Grace in the Lord Jeſus. Therefore if any man come to him, he will in no wiſe caſt him out.

3. *Chriſt did never yet caſt out any that came to Him.* We read of many in the Goſpel that came

came to Christ for help and healing as to their bodies, but we do not read of so much as *one* whom he would not have compassion on. Indeed he *made* as if he would have rejected the Woman of *Canaan* when she came to him, but he never intended it, only was willing to try her Faith: And why was this? but to let us know that if men come to Christ with their souls, they shall surely find acceptance with him. Many have come to Christ, yea, many *thousands* but he never rejected any one of them. Tho some of them which came to Christ, were such as one would have thought he would never have given entertainment to, having been the vilest wretches in the world; yet when they came to Christ with a true desire to be his Disciples, he never did reject so much as one of them; therefore we may conclude he never will do so.

4. *Christ dyed for those that shall come to him.* Therefore he will in no wise cast them out! If God has given to a man a heart to come to Christ, he may be sure that Christ hath dyed for him. *Joh.* 12. 32. *And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.* If a soul be drawn to Christ, 'tis certain that Christ was lifted up on the Cross, there to bleed & die for the salvation of that very soul. And

if

if Christ has loved him, so as to dye for him, he will never cast him out. Sinners may look upon Christ dying on the Cross, and see him with his armes open, ready to embrace them.

5. *Christ does invite and call upon Sinners to come to him.* If a man does invite another to come to his house, will he thrust him out of doors when he does come? And shall we then think that the blessed *Lord Jesus* will do so? When he was on the earth, he did personally invite Sinners to come to him. See a glorious Scripture for this, *Joh.* 7. 37. *In the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, if any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.* If *any* man (saith Christ) be he who he will, *if any man* desireth the waters of life for his soul, let him come to me he shall be welcome. Christ was willing that all should know this; therefore he went into the Temple to proclaim it, and that on the *feast*, and on the *last* day of the feast, when there was the greatest Concourse of People, *and he stood* that he might be seen of all, and *cryed*, that he might be heard of all, Come to me, saith Christ, any man that has a *Thirst*, a desire after Salvation. And now Christ is gone to Heaven he calls from *that* Temple, and bids Sinners come to him, *Heb.* 25. *See that*

ye

ye refuſe not him that ſpeaketh, for if they eſcaped not who refuſed him that ſpake on earth, much more ſhall not we eſcape if we turn away from him that ſpeaketh from Heaven. He inviteth and calls Sinners to come to him by his written Word, the *holy Scriptures* which are the Word of Chriſt. Therein he ſayth, *Look unto me and be ye ſaved, all ye ends of the earth.* Iſai 45. 22. The Scriptures are a gracious Letter which Chriſt has ſent from heaven, inviting who will, to come to him, and be ſaved by him. And he concludeth the letter with a moſt ſweet and bleſſed invitation to come to the waters of life. *Rev.* 22. 17. Chriſt alſo doth ſtill continue to invite ſinners to come to him, by his *Meſſengers* whom he ſends to preach the Goſpel in his Name. *Wiſdom hath ſent forth her Maidens, ſhe crieth upon the higheſt places of the city, whoſo is ſimple let him turn in hither, come eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled.* Prov. 9. 3, 4, 5. Who are we to underſtand by the *Maidens* of Wiſdome, but the Miniſters of Chriſt; who are likewiſe called *the Bridegroom's Friends, Joh.* 3. 29. Iſ that their great work is to *woo* and win ſouls for Chriſt, and they rejoice in nothing more, than when they can perſwade men to forſake their ſins, and come to Jeſus Chriſt for Salvation. But the ſtrength of this Argu-

Argument will appear further, if we consider the Properties of this invitation, whereby the *Lord Jesus* does call upon sinners to *come unto him.*

1. *It is a real, earnest Invitation.* Christ's heart is in it. Hence he is troubled & grieved at the heart when Sinners will not come to him. When he had often Invited the *Jews* to come under his wing and they would not, he wept over them, saying to *Jerusalem, O that thou hadst known in this thy day the things that belong to thy peace.* He does most affectionately call upon sinners to come to him. *Joh.* 7. 37. *He cried and said come unto me.* A loud cry argueth earnestness. Christ is marvellous importunate in his urging sinners to come to him. He is not willing to be put off, or to take denial. See else, *Isai.* 55. 1, 2. --- *Come ye to the waters,* -- *come ye,* -- *yea come. Hearken dilligently unto me, incline your ear, and come unto me.* (mind how earnest the Lord is in his invitation, *Come, come, yea come, come unto me)* Yea hear, *hearken diligently, q. d.* by all meanes hearken to me, if ever you would hear good counsil hear it now. That men may see Christ is in earnest with them, he sets before them the most alluring promises of the Gospel, he tells them, they shall have all the good their souls can desire, if they will but come unto him: and denounceth more

dreadful Threatnings than ever were thundered upon mount *Ebal*, againſt thoſe that ſhall *neglect ſo great Salvation.*

It is an often renewed and long continued Invitation. Mat. 22. 37. --- *how often would I have gathered you under my wings!* Where is the Sinner that liveth under the Goſpel, that can ſay how often he has been invited to come unto Jeſus Chriſt! *Behold he ſtands at the door and knocks*, *Rev.* 3. 2. He does not give one knock at a ſinners heart, and away, but he *ſtands* there; and knocks *again*, and calleth *again.* He knocks at a ſinners heart by Mercyes, by Afflictions, by Sermons, and by manifold diſpenſations. There are ſome ſinners that Chriſt continueth Inviting of them, all their dayes. *He ſtretcheth out his hand, i. e.* he beckens to them that they ſhould come to him *all the day long.* Iſa. 65. 1. As long as the day of Grace laſts, ſo long does Chriſt continue *calling* the ſinner to come to him, Now there are ſome that the day of Grace laſts as long as life in this world (tho it is not ſo with all) continnueth.

3. *Where the* Goſpel *cometh, this Invitation is univerſal.* Iſa. 55. 1. *Ho* (ſee what a gracious Proclamation is here) *every one that thirſteth, come to the waters!* So that the Goſpel contains a general proclamation of mercy to all com-

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comers; Christ excludeth none that will come. If men do not by their impenitence and unbelief shut the door against their own souls, Christ shuts the door against none; but saith to every one, come to me and welcome. *Rev.* 22. 17. The call of Christ reacheth every particular soul. Yea, *thee* in particular as truly as if he should from Heaven call thee by name, as he did *Saul*. If Christ should call from Heaven and say, thou, *John* such a one, or thou *Mary* such a one, why dost thou not come to me, to be saved? wouldst thou not do as he did, fall down trembling, and say *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do.* Why, the Call of Christ in the Gospel is no less than this comes to.

USE. Let sinners be exhorted to come to Jesus Christ without any further delay.

To awaken hereunto.

Consid. 1. *That this is a matter of Infinite Concernment.* What are all thy worldly concernments which thy heart is taken up with, to this which I am now speaking of? *For what is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Mat.* 16. 26. Thou wilt lose thy soul for ever if thou dost not come to Christ. All other things which thou canst do are nothing without *THIS*, What is thy Praying, Hearing, Sabbath-keeping, Without *this*?

They are indeed good things and neceſſary to be attended, but without Chriſt they will never ſave thee. So that intruth all the everlaſting concernments of thy immortal ſoul depend upon *this one thing*, of thy *coming* or *not coming* to *JESUS CHRIST*. Remember that Scripture, *Luk.* 10. 42. *There is one thing needful.* Care about an Intereſt in Chriſt is the one thing needful: he that makes ſure of that one thing will be a happy man for ever; but he that ſhall continue to neglect that one thing (be he high or low, rich or poor) he will be a damned creature to all Eternity. So that there is nothing of greater nor of ſo great concernment as this one Thing.

Conſider. 2, *The great evil that is in* not *coming to Jeſus Chriſt.* This is the great damning Sin of *Unbelief*, concerning which the Scripture ſpeakes ſo dreadfully. By that unbelief which the Scripture ſpeaketh of as a damning ſin, is not meant a man's doubting whether Chriſt dyed for *him*, or whether his ſins are pardoned, many a believer has ſuch doubtings, and ſome hypocrites have deluding confidences, they are perſwaded if any in the world be ſaved they ſhall: But by *Unbelief* is meant, *The not coming unto Chriſt* when called when Invited. This is a moſt heinous Sin. Chriſt

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ſayth *the ſpirit ſhall convince the world of ſin because they believe not on me. Joh.* 16. 9. *b. c.* he ſhall convince them that they have bin guilty of grievous ſin in not beleeving. Whoever thou art; this is the greateſt ſin that ever thou waſt guilty of in all thy life. Sins againſt the Goſpel have more of evil in them, than ſins againſt the Law only. It may be ſome of you have bin guilty of great ſins: guilty perhaps of Drunkenneſs, Sabbath-breaking, Diſobedience to Parents, Theft, Lying, theſe are fearful ſins indeed: But thou haſt been guilty of another ſin worſe than all theſe, that is, *Unbelief.* This is the moſt God-provoking ſin in the world. As nothing pleaſeth him ſo much as faith, ſo nothing provokes him like unbelief. If a man would be ſo wicked as to ſit down and ſtudy how he might grieve and vex the ſoul of God, he could not do it more than by unbelief. The unbelief of the *Children of Iſrael* provoked God *to ſware in his wrath* againſt them, that they ſhould never enter into his reſt. *Heb.* 3. 18, 19. To deſpiſe a great gift is highly provoking: now Chriſt is the greateſt gift. *Joh.* 4. 10. *He is* the *gift of God.* God could not make a greater offer, or beſtow a better gift than that. Now the Unbeliever ſlights, and maketh light of this offer. The precious blood of Chriſt has been offerd to

thee in the Goſpel, to waſh thy ſoul, and to purge away thy ſins, but by unbelief thou deſpiſeſt it, as tho it were nothing worth. Men think the ſin of the *Jews*, in crucifying the ſon of God was exceeding great, and ſo it was: But thou an unbeliever art guilty of that Sin. As it was ſaid to Jeruſalem, *thou haſt juſtified thy ſiſter Samaria.* Ezek. 16. 51; Thus thy unbelief is a practical Juſtification of the *Jews* in their crucifying Chriſt. ſo that indeed there is Blaſphemy in this ſin. What greater Blaſphemy than to ſay, The Jews did well to crucifie Chriſt? And thou by continuing in thy unbelief doſt ſay no leſs. And in *another* reſpect there is Blaſphemy in this ſin, for it *giveth the Lye* to the bleſſed and holy GOD. 1. Joh. 5. 10. *He that beleeveth not God, hath made him a liar because he beleeveth not the record that God gave of his ſon.* God ſaid from heaven concerning Jeſus Chriſt, *This is my ſon*, but the unbeliver ſaith that's not true. By his unbelief he practically declareth that Chriſt is *not* the Son of God. O what a horrid thing is this! and therefore it will bring the ſoreſt judgment upon all that ſhall dye under the guilt of it. It will be more tolerable for *Sodom* & *Gomorrha* than for ſuch ſinners as have refuſed to come unto Chriſt. *Mat.* 10. 15. O think ſadly of this. If any man or woman in this

this congregation, who have had Chriſt offer'd them in the Goſpel, ſhall dye in their ſins, it will in the day of judgment be more tolerable for *Sodom* than for that man, than for that woman. Know alſo that unbelievers will be of all ſinners the moſt inexcuſable when they ſhall ſtand before the Judment ſeat of Chriſt at the great DAY. Joh. 15. 22. *If I had not come and ſpoken to them, they had not had ſin,* (h. e. they had no ſin in compariſon of what is now upon them) *but now they have no cloke for their ſin.* They have no excuſe to make: they might have been ſaved but would not. O ſinners! you have had miracles to make you beleeve, you do ſee it in the Goſpel: and yet will you not believe? will you not come to Chriſt? O think what thou wilt ſay to Chriſt for excuſe of thy not coming to him, when he did ſo graciouſly invite thee. If thou continueſt in thy ſins and unbelief, He will ſay to thee as *David* did to the *Amalekite* condemned by him, 2. *Sam.* 1. 16. *Thy blood be upon thy head.* When the Lord Jeſus ſhall ſit upon the throne of his glory and call thee before him, and ſay, Did not ſuch a Miniſter of mine preach to thee, that if thou wouldeſt beleeve on Chriſt thou ſhouldeſt be ſaved, but if *not* thou ſhouldſt be damn'd, and thy heart ſhall anſwer, Lord, he did tell me ſo, then will the Lord Jeſus ſay

The blood of thy soul be upon thy own head, I, and my Throne will be guiltless for ever, but thy blood shall be upon thy own head.

Consider 3. *They that will not come to Christ now when they* may, *shall not come to him another day tho' they* would. O that men who live under the Gospel would remember and lay to heart, what the Lord Jesus has spoken, *Prov.* 1. 24. &c. *Because I have called and you refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded, but ye have set at nought all my counsil, and would none of my reproof; I will also laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh, when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind: when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me but I will not answer, they shall seek me early but they shall not find me.* Now sinner, thou art fairly offerd, but thou shalt not alwayes have Christ preached to thee, nor his Spirit to *strive with* thee *alwayes*. Now he opens the doors of his House and bids you come in; but hereafter the doors of his House will be shutt: and then sinners will cry unto him, *Lord, Lord open to us*; but He will say, you come too late now, you cry too late: had you come and cryed thus *sooner*, you might have come in; but now *away* with you, none of you

you that were invited, but slighted the Calls of the Gospel shall taste of my Supper. *Luk.* 13. 29. At the day of Judgment those two words, *Come*, and *Goe*, shall divide all the world. As for such as did come to Christ by Faith whilst they were in this World, Christ will say to them at the last Day, *Come you blessed, come*, and be with me in Heaven for ever; but as for them that did not come to Christ whilst they were living on the earth, He will say to them, *go*, depart from me, out of my sight for ever, go and suffer with that Devil whom you chose to serve, rather than to obey the Gospel and to become the servants of Jesus Christ.

O let the consideration of such things as these are, awaken and perswade sinners to *come unto Christ*. But it may be there are some discouraged Souls, that have secret Objections in their hearts, which make them afraid to come to Christ. Let's hear what they are. For I would fain prevail with souls to come unto Jesus Christ; and the Lord grant me much success therein. O let nothing discourage you. I am sure no soul among you hath sufficient reason to be discouraged from coming to the Lord Jesus.

But 1st. One objects, *I am a poor unworthy creature*

creature, and should I come to Christ?

Answ. Christ never rejected any that came to him for their *unworthiness.* Nay, he bids them come to him. *Rev.* 3. 17, 18. *Thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. I counsil thee to buy of me gold that thou mayst be rich.* Especially if poor creatures be sensible of their own unworthiness, then Christ invites them to come to him. *Mat.* 11. 28. *Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden.* -- As for such as are *burthened* with the Sense of sin and guiltiness & misery, that sin lieth as a heavy burden upon their souls, to *them* Christ sayes, *Come to me.* He offers Himself and all his benefits upon *Free cost.* Rev. 22. 17. *Let him that is a thirst come, and whosoever will, let him come and take the water of life freely.* Christ will not *sell* his bloud, but he will give it freely. What tho thou art as poor as a Beggar, yet come to Christ, and hee'll make thee exceeding rich and glorious. Therefore he saith, *Come, without mony and without price. Isa.* 55. 1. Some that have not *money*, yet they have a *price*, h. e. Something instead of mony, but he that has *neither* is a poor man indeed. Tho thou art thus poor as to have neither mony nor moneysworth, yet come to Christ. What manner of persons were those that came to *David*, and

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were kindly entertained by him. It is ſaid *Every one that was in diſtreſs, and that was in debt, gathered themſelves to him, and he became a Captain over them.* 1. *Sam.* 22. 2. So art *thou* in debt, and art thou in diſtreſs of ſoul; then goe to *David*, goe to Chriſt, go poor, a beggar, and hard beſtead, and Hee'l receive thee and pay all thy debts for thee too, and make thee rich beſides, O who would not goe, to Jeſus Chriſt.

Object. 2. Another ſayes. *You don't know what a Sinner I have bin; I am a* great *Sinner, and an* old *ſinner, an old Swearer, and old in Adulteries; and ſhall* I *dare to come to the Holy Son of God, would you have ſuch a one as* I *to goe to Chriſt?*

Anſw. Yes, Thou haſt ſo much the more need to come to Chriſt. If a man ſhould ſay, *I am very ſick, and* therefore *I am afraid to goe to the Phyſician*, what a ſtrange Saying were *that!* It is juſt ſo when any one ſhall ſay, I have been a grievous ſinner, therefore I a mafraid to goe to Jeſus Chriſt. He, and He *only* can recover thy guilty dying ſoul. If thou doſt indeed goe to him with a deſire to be his ſervant, Hee'l accept of thee, notwithſtanding thy *many* and *great* ſins; Such is his gracious nature as that he will forgive all the wrongs thou haſt done to him. Tho thou haſt deſpi-

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despised him, tho thou hast killed him by thy sins, yet he will, accept of thee. Remember how *Joseph* received his *Brethren* when they came to him humbly confessing the wrong they had done him, and begging for pardon, *he comforted them and spake kindly to them* Gen. 50. 4. So will Christ do much more; for He came into the world to save the chief of Sinners. 1. *Tim.* 1. 15. Who did the Lord Jesus first appear to after his Resurrection? was it not to *Mary Magdelen*, out of whom he cast seven Devils, and more Devils out of her Soul than out of her Body? As great sinners as thou hast been, when they have come to Christ, he would *in no wise cast them out*. What think you of the Woman of *Samaria* who had lived in Adultry, but when she came to *Christ* with a penitent heart He gave her living Water! What d'ee think of the Woman spoken of *Luk.* 7. 37. *which was a Sinner*, h. e. a notorious, infamous Sinner, whose name rung in Town and Country for her wickedness, yet when she came to Christ, and washed his feet with her tears, *her sins which were* many *were forgiven*. And what say you to the *Corinthians*, who had, some of them been Theeves, Drunkards, effeminate, Adulterers, Sodomites, (horrid sins) but *they were washed and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus*, 1. Cor. 6. 9, 10, 11.

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Is not murder a crying ſin? But to murder the Son of God! is a crime beyond parallel: Yet thoſe very men that embrued their hands in the blood of Chriſt, when they came humbly to him for mercy, beleeving on Him whom they had crucified, he received them & obtain'd their peace with God. If thou doſt come to him, Hee'll waſh thy ſoul in his Blood. That Soul of thine, which ſin has made as black as Hell, if waſh't in the bloud of Chriſt, ſhall be made as white as Snow. *Pſal.* 51. 7. *Purge me with hyſſop,* (i. e. with the bloud of Chriſt, ſignified by the blood ſprinkled with Hyſſop) *and I ſhall be whiter than the ſnow.* O come to Chriſt, and hee'll ſprinkle his blood upon thee, as he ſpeaketh *Prov.* 1. 23. *Turn you at my reproof, behold I will pour out my ſpirit unto you.* So he ſayes turn unto me, and I will pour out my blood upon you. The Lord Jeſus Chriſt never did reject any that came to him, meerly becauſe their ſins are many and great; Therefore he will not reject thee.

Object. 3. Another objects, *I am afraid that I have committed the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, and therefore it will be in vain for me to go unto Chriſt.*

Anſ. The Reaſon why they that commit that ſin periſh, is not becauſe Chriſt is not able to ſave them

them, or that their is not merit enough in the Blood of Christ to obtain forgiveness for so great a sin as that is, but because they have not an heart to come to Christ. The Unpardonable Sin is alwaies attended with final Impenitency, and everlasting Hardness of heart. And this Objection is a meer Temptation of Satan, who seeketh thereby to discourage souls from coming to Christ, He useth to tell those who never did nor ever shall commit *the great Transgression*, they have been guilty of it. Tell me, hast thou any desire to come to Christ? Dost thou prize his blood? then 'tis certain thou never wast guilty of the unpardonable sin, for *such* trample under foot the Son of God, and count his blood an unholy thing. *Heb.* 10. 24. Art thou a malicious persecutor of the *wayes* and *People* of God? if not, *I* dare pronounce unto thee, that thou wast never guilty of the sin against the Holy Ghost; for there never was any man guilty of that sin, but that he was given up to a spirit of persecution; He is filled with rage against the Servants of God, because they fear his Name, and dare not sin against him. Yet again, Didst thou ever maliciously blaspheme or speak evil of that which thou knowest was the work of God's Spirit? If thou hast not done despite to the Spirit of Grace, thou hast not committed the sin against

the Holy Ghost. I must confess it is to be feared, that many of the malignant adversaries of the Truth in these late dayes, have bin judicially given up by God to commit that sin; yet I will say, I am perswaded there is not one soul in this Congregation this day. that ever was guilty of it. O yet let not this, nor any other Objection discourage any one among you from coming to Christ.

For Direction here.

1. *See thy absolute need of Christ.* Without this no one will come to him. For men are naturally averse to nothing so much as to this, so that they will not come to Christ, except sense of extream neeessity compel them to it. Will a man that thinks himself well, run to a Physician for help? The whole have no need of a Physician but the sick. *Mat.* 9. 12. But if men see their absolute need of Christ, then they'll be willing to go to him. When the sons of *Jacob* saw themselves like to perish by the Famine, they would go to Joseph for bread, that they might live and not dye. An Israelite when he saw the Avenger of blood pursuing of him, was made willing to betake himself to the *City of refuge.* Behold sinner, the *Avenger of bloud* is at thy heels! if thou dost not make haste to the City of refuge, hee'll

them, or that their is not merit enough in the Blood of Christ to obtain forgiveneſs for ſo great a ſin as that is, but becauſe they have not an heart to come to Christ. The Unpardonable Sin is alwaies attended with final Impenitency, and everlaſting Hardneſs of heart. And this Objection is a meer Temptation of Satan, who ſeeketh thereby to diſcourage ſouls from coming to Christ, He uſeth to tell thoſe who never did nor ever ſhall commit *the great Tranſgreſſion*, they have been guilty of it. Tell me, haſt thou any deſire to come to Christ? Doſt thou prize his blood? then 'tis certain thou never waſt guilty of the unpardonable ſin, for *ſuch* trample under foot the Son of God, and count his blood an unholy thing. *Heb.* 10. 24. Art thou a malicious perſecutor of the *wayes* and *People* of God? if not, *I* dare pronounce unto thee, that thou waſt never guilty of the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt; for there never was any man guilty of that ſin, but that he was given up to a ſpirit of perſecution; He is filled with rage againſt the Servants of God, becauſe they fear his Name, and dare not ſin againſt him. Yet again, Didſt thou ever maliciouſly blaſpheme or ſpeak evil of that which thou knoweſt was the work of God's Spirit? If thou haſt not done deſpite to the Spirit of Grace, thou haſt not committed the ſin againſt

the Holy Ghoſt. I muſt confeſs it is to be feared, that many of the malignant adverſaries of the Truth in theſe late dayes, have bin judicially given up by God to commit that ſin; yet I will ſay, I am perſwaded there is not one ſoul in this Congregation this day. that ever was guilty of it. O yet let not this, nor any other Objection diſcourage any one among you from coming to Chriſt.

For Direction here.

1. *See thy abſolute need of Chriſt.* Without this no one will come to him. For men are naturally averſe to nothing ſo much as to this, ſo that they will not come to Chriſt, except ſenſe of extream neeeſſity compel them to it. Will a man that thinks himſelf well, run to a Phyſician for help? The whole have no need of a Phyſician but the ſick. *Mat.* 9. 12. But if men ſee their abſolute need of Chriſt, then they'll be willing to go to him. When the ſons of *Jacob* ſaw themſelves like to periſh by the Famine, they would go to Joſeph for bread, that they might live and not dye. An Iſraelite when he ſaw the Avenger of blood purſuing of him, was made willing to betake himſelf to the *City of refuge.* Behold ſinner, the *Avenger of bloud* is at thy heels! if thou doſt not make haſte to the City of refuge, hee'll

overtake thee and slay thy soul. Know that without Christ, thou hast a soul within thee that must perish to Eternity. If thou hadst been guilty but of *one* sin in all thy life, thou must lye and dye for ever under the wrath of God, if Christ save thee not. But what wilt thou do then having been guilty of so many and great sins? thou canst not save thy self. all thy *own* Righteousness, all thy Prayers, Sorrows, Tears. if thou couldst weep Seas of blood cannot save thee. Nay Heaven and earth cannot save thee without Christ. None but *Christ* can deliver from the Wrath to come.

2. *Beware of those things which will keep thee from closing with the Lord Jesus Christ.* Inordinate affection to the world, keeps many a man from Coming to Christ: So it was with the young man in the Gospel, his heart was so set upon the world that he neglected to close with Jesus Christ. Thus in the Parable they that were bidden to the Wedding of the King's, son but would not come; what hindred them? *Mat.* 22. 5. *they went their way one to his Farme and another to his merchandise.* Again, Love to some Sin, keeps men from Closing with Christ. *Joh.* 5. 44. *How can you believe, which receive honour one of another?* If a man has a lust of Pride which he loveth

loveth, a lust of Drunkeness, a lust of Uncleaness, or any other lust which he loveth so as not to be willing to part with it for Christ, how can he believe? And *evil Companions* keep many a soul from going to Christ. The Scripture therefore saith, *Forsake the foolish and live*. Prov. 9. 6. And again, *Arise from the dead*, (h. e. come away from thy dead Companions in sin,) *and Christ shall give thee light*. Ephes. 5. 14. Why do not Young men come to Christ, when the Gospel calls them? Alas *some* of them have thoughts about it, but this or that vain Companion hinders them. As ever thou dost desire an Interest in Christ, or Salvation *by* Him, thou must break off thy Companionship with those vain persons that will prove the Ruin of thy Soul.

3. *When thy Heart is made willing to part with* All *for Christ, venture thy soul upon Him.* Let this Scripture *him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out* encourage thee. Many of the Elect of God have at their first Conversion been much encouraged by it. Cast thy self and soul into the armes of the Son of God. Venture all thy everlasting Concerns upon the Lord Jesus. Remember how

it was with the Leprous men whom we read of 2. *King.* 7. 4. *They said one to another, why sit we here until we dye, if we sit still here we dye; and therefore come, let us fall unto the Host of the Syrians, If they save us alive we shall live, and if they kill us we shall but dye.* So think with thy self, If I sit still and keep at a distance from Christ, I shall certainly dye, if I goe to him, I shall but dye, and it may be I shall live, therefore I'le venture and goe to Christ. Resolve as *Esther* did, *If I perish I perish* (said she) yet I'll go into the Kings presence. so say thou, I'll go to the Son of God, and if I perish, I'll perish lying at his feet: Nay, then thou shalt never perish.

4. *Be often Coming to Jesus Christ.* Is not thy heart dead? goe to Christ to quicken it. Is not thy Spirit too often out of Frame, go to Christ to help it. There are many that complain, they know not whether they have true Faith or not; The best way in the World to put it out of Question, is to goe to Christ again, and give thy self up to Him. By often Beleeving, a Christian shall feel in his Heart that he doth believe. By often coming

Coming to Christ, and rolling thy self upon Him, Thou wilt see thy self in the Armes of the SON of GOD for ever.

O then Come to *Him*, and *He will in no wise cast thee out.*

Sinners

Stanford

SINNERS ought to Repent *NOW.*

Jer. 25. 5.

They ſaid, turn ye again NOW *every one from his evil way.*

THis Chapter contains the ſubſtance of a Sermon preached by the Prophet *Jeremie*, Wherein he declareth that Deſtroying Judgments were coming upon the Jews: and mentions the reaſon of it, *namely*, Becauſe of their Impenitency and obſtinacy in Sin. That they were obſtinate in their evil way, appeared by their Refuſing to hearken to the good Counſils and Admonitions of thoſe whom God had ſent to them. And this evil was aggravated,

1. In that they had been a long time ſpoken to. The Prophet tells them, that at the day when he delivered that Sermon, He had

himſelf bin preaching to them three and twenty years, and all that time urging them to Repentance, but they would not regard what was ſpoken to them in the Name of the Lord, *ver.* 3. this was great contumacy.

2. Their Obſtinacy was yet more aggravated, in that God had told them of their ſins, and what would be the Conſequent thereof, not only by *Jeremie*, but by many *other* Prophets. *ver.* 4. *the Lord hath ſent unto you all his ſervants the Prophets, riſing early and ſending them; but you have not hearkened, nor enclined your ear to hear.* The Lord ſpeaketh after the manner of men, and ſayth his heart was upon it, (as a man whoſe heart is engaged in buſineſs will *riſe early* to ſee it done; thus God did earneſtly endeavour) to reclaim them from their evil wayes, but they would not hear, tho Prophet after Prophet was ſent unto them for a long time together. This argued great hardneſs of heart, to contemn ſuch perſons, as the holy prophets were, and not *one* of them, but many of them, yea *all* of them.

The words which have been read, expreſs the *Summe* of the Doctrine taught by the Prophets, *viz.*

1. That every man ſhould turn from his evil way.

2. That

2. That men ſhould not *delay* that work. They did not only ſay, Turn, but turn *NOW*. The Doctrine therefore at preſent to be inſiſted on is,

DOCT. *That every ſinner unto whom the word of the Lord cometh, is bound to turn from his evil way,* and that NOW *without delaying.*

The Explication and Confirmation of this Truth may be expreſſed in 4 propoſitions, all which are Comprehended in the Doctrine delivered.

Propoſ. 1. *Sin is an evil.* In the Scripture ſin is often compared to a *way*, It is therefore ſaid in the 1ſt. Pſalm and the 1ſt. verſe *Bleſſed is the man that ſtandeth not,* (h. e. that remaineth not) *in the way of* ſinners. *h. e.* in *Sin*, which [illegible]he way that ſinners delight to abide in. Hence men are ſaid to *walk in ſin*, *Eph.* 2. 2, And to *go on* therein, *Pſal.* 68. 21. And it is an *evil* way: Wiſdome ſaith, *The* evil *way doe I hate.* Prov. 8. 13. *h. e.* the way of ſin: which is alſo called *the way which is not good*, Pſal. 36. 4. Sin is ſaid to be an evil way eſpecially in 2 reſpects,

1. In that men thereby go from God the *Chief Good*. That which leads men from God the chief Good muſt needs be an *evil* way. Now is this true of *Sin*. Men by Sin turn from God; and the more they ſin the fur-

further doe they goe from God. *Jer.* 2. 5. *They are gone* farr *from me.* A ſinner has bin doing nothing elſe but departing from God all his dayes; ſo that there is an infinite diſtance betweeen God & him. *Eph.* 2. 13. *You were ſometimes farr off.* h. e. farr off from God, and from Heaven. And the longer a man liveth in ſin, the greater is the ſeparation between God and his ſoul. For his back is turned upon God. *Jer.* 32. 33. *They have turned to me the* back *and not the face.* And therefore the longer a ſinner ſhall goe on in his preſent way, the further will he be from God and from Heaven, and from all Happineſs. Sin then is an evil Way. It appears to be ſo,

2. In that it is a way which if continued in, will bring to miſery at laſt. All men look upon *Puniſhment* as evil: Now Sin if it be not turned from will certainly be puniſhed at laſt. *Jer.* 2. 18. *Know therefore and ſee, that it is an evil thing and* bitter *that thou haſt forſaken the Lord thy God.* Bitter Puniſhments are ſometimes inflicted on ſinners in *this* world. Temporal Judgments on the Bodies, Eſtates, Names, Families; and ſpiritual Judgements on the Souls of ſinners uſe to follow upon the going *on* in ſin. To be ſure if ſin be not turned from, it will end in death. *Rom.* 6. 22. *The end of theſe things is death.* Hence ſin is

compared

compared to a *way*, becauſe it *leads* men to deſtruction. *Prov.* 7. 27, *Her houſe is the* way *to* Hell, *going down to the chambers of death.* Hell is an undeſirable place; therefore Sin which is the *way* thither, muſt needs be an *evil* way.

Propoſ. 2. *Every ſinner hath a way of Sin.* That's implyed in the Text, when it is ſaid, Turn you *every* man from *his* evil way. Every man that is in a ſtate of Sin and unregeneracy, does walk in ſome way of ſin or other which he muſt turn from. This is the Difference between a Regenerate and an *Un*regenerate man; A Regenerate man may indeed fall into into ſin, but then hee's out of his way which he uſeth to walk in. *Pſal.* 119. 128. *I hate every falſe way.* And in *verſe.* 101. he ſayes, *I have refrained my feet from every evil way.* Hence Sin is ſaid to be unto the Lord's people, *a way not caſt up.* (i. e. not frequented) *Jer.* 18. 15. Never ſince the world began did a godly man *walk* in that way. There's a difference between *ſinning* and having a *way* of ſinning. There is no man that doeth good & ſinneth not, and there is no good man that has a *way* of ſinning. *Pſal.* 139. *ult. See if there be any* way *of wickedneſs in me.* But every unregenerate man has a way of wickedneſs which he chooſeth to goe in. A *Way* of ſin imply-

implieth a Track a Courſe of Sin; when a man ſhall make ſin his Trade: ſo 'tis with every ungodly man. He is *a worker of iniquity.* A committer of Sin. a Doer of it *Joh.* 8. 34. Some ſinners live in more Sins than one: In Pride, in Drunkeneſs, in Uncleaneſs, and all at the ſame time. *Serving divers luſts.* Tit. 3. 3. But every ſinner has at leaſt *one* Sin, which he loveth and liveth in, and will not be perſwaded to forſake that evil way. It is ſweet in his mouth. He ſpares it and forſakes it not, but keeps it within his mouth. *Job.* 20. 13. A Hypocrite may go farr: He may fore-go many ſins (as *Herod* did) yet there is ſome ſin or other which is an *evil way* that his ſoul is going to deſtruction in.

Propoſ. 3. *Every ſinner unto whom the Word of God comes, is bound to turn from his evil way.* The firſt thing which God required of man was that he ſhould not ſin at all. The Law required that: nor does the Law ſpeak any thing of Repentance, but the *Goſpel* does. The Law requireth that men ſhould not turn from God; The Goſpel requireth that men having turned from God, ſhould turn to him again. Faith and Repentance are the great duties required in the Goſpel. This was the Scope and ſumme of all the Apoſtles preaching. *Act.* 20. 21. *Teſtifying both to the Jewes and alſo to*

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the Greeks, Repentance towards God, and Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And this Commandment reacheth every sinner where the Gospel cometh. *Chapt.* 17. 30. *Now God commandeth all men every where to repent.* True Repentance consisteth chiefly in Turning from sin. Hence it is sometimes called *Conversion.* When a man is gone out of the right way, and turns back again, *that's* Conversion. So tis with sinners: They are all gone astray; but God in the word of the Gospel calls aloud to them that they should turn back again. And that *turning from sin* which the Word of God requireth, is to be both *External* and *Internal.* It is necessary that a Sinner should lead a new life, that his outward Actions, and Conversation should be Reformed. *Jer.* 7. 3. *Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your waies and your doings,* but thats not all which God requireth. He calls for the *Heart.* Many a man turns from sin outwardly for fear of Punishment either from God or man, who yet loveth it in his heart still. But the Word of God requireth that men should hate sin. *Rom.* 12. 9. *Abhor that which is evil.* When a mans heart within him is turned and set against sin, as sin, then he has truly experienced that Conversion which the Word of God requireth. *Ezek.* 18. 31. *Cast away from you*

all

all your Tranſgreſſions, and make you a new heart. Thats a new heart which hates Sin, and loveth Holineſs. And that Sinners might be perſwaded to this turning, the Word of God is full of gracious Promiſes unto repenting, returning ſinners. God in his Word aſſureth them, that they ſhall find mercy, whatever their Provocations and Rebellions have been. *Iſai.* 55. 7. *Let the wicked forſake his way, and let him return to the Lord and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, and he will abundantly pardon.* God promiſeth the Sinner his life if he will return. He ſaith, *turn your ſelves and live you.* And if the wicked be warned from his wicked way, *he ſhall ſave his life.* *Ezek.* 3. 18. and 18. 32. Heaven is promiſed to returning ſinners. Thus in my Text, *Turn every one from his evil way --- and dwell in the land for ever and ever.* There's ſomething Spiritual ultimately intended in thoſe words, *viz.* that every one that truly repents of ſin ſhall dwell in Heaven for evermore, of which dwelling in the land of *Canaan* was a Figure. And the Word of God denounceth no leſs than Eternal Death to every Sinner that will not turn. *Ezek.* 33. 11. *Say unto them, as I live ſaith the Lord God, I have no pleaſure in the death of the wicked: but that the wicked ſhould turn from his way and live. Turn you, turn you from*

your

your evil wayes for why will you dye, O houſe of Iſrael. This is the great voice of God in his word to every Sinner, the great deſign of the Scriptures both in the old and new Teſtament is to declare this, that the Sinner who ſhall turn from all his Sins ſhall live, but the Sinner that will *not* turn from all his Sins ſhall *dye* for ever. Thus ſaith God to every ſoul of of man, unto whom his Word cometh, thou muſt either turn from thy evil way, or burn for ever in the fire that ſhall never be quenched.

Propoſ. 4. *Men ought not only to turn from every evil way but to doe it* Now, *and in no wiſe to delay that matter.* Thus did the Prophets with one voice declare, as is in the Context intimated. And indeed this follows upon what has bin ſpoken. If God command men to turn, it is neceſſary that they ſhould doe it *now.* For every Commandment of God ought to be immediately complyed with. There ought to be no delaying, or diſputing whether what the great GOD requireth ſhould be obeyed or no. When the Lord commanded *Abraham* to circumciſe his Family, it is noted that *in the ſelf ſame day* he did as God ſaid to him. *Gen.* 17. 23. And when he was required to Sacrifice his only ſon, its recorded of him, that *he roſe early in the morning*, and went to the place

of

of which God had told him. *Cap.* 22. 3. When the Lord Chriſt called his Diſciples to follow him tis ſaid, that *ſtraightway* they did ſo. *Mat*, 4. 20. And when *Paul* was called to the Apoſtleſhip, he did not conſult with fleſh and bloud, *h. e.* he did not ask counſil of any man whether he ſhould do what God required of him, but immediately fell about the work, *Gal*, 1. 16. Thus every divine precept ought *preſently* to be complyed with. So ſhould this of turning from every evil way. And there is Infinite Reaſon that men ſhould turn *now*; as we cannot but ſee if we duly mind, either what they are commanded to turn *from*, or whom they are to turn *unto*.

1. *What is it that ſinners are to turn* from? It is from *Sin*, which is an unprofitable thing. Men don't uſe to ſtand conſidering whether they ſhall retain a thing which they are ſure they ſhall never gain any thing *by*: Now they may be ſure they ſhall never gain any thing by ſin. *Rom*, 6. 21. *What fruit had you of thoſe things whereof ye are now aſhamed?* There is nothing but ſhame and Sorrow to be gained by ſin. Yea, it is not only an *unprofitable*, but a *hurtful* thing. If a man were running into the mouth of a bloudy ſerpent ready to devour him, would he ſtand pauſing upon it whether he ſhould turn back? No, he would preſently

preſently turn about. Sin is a cruel Serpent which devoureth immortal ſouls, and therefore it is the greateſt madneſs in the world for men to make a queſtion whether he ſhould not preſently turn from ſuch an evil.

2. *Who is it that ſinners are to turn* unto? It is unto God in Jeſus Chriſt, *Joel.2.12 Turn you even to me with all your heart, ſaith the Lord.* Even unto that God who is the Fountain of Living water. He in whoſe favour is Life, and whoſe Loving Kindneſs is better than *life* it ſelf. He who will give Grace and Glory, and will with-hold no good thing from them that ſhall turn unto him.

USE. Let it be a word of earneſt Exhortation. *Oh that every Sinner would be perſwaded to do as the Doctrine ſayth,* To turn from his evil way, and to do it *Now* without Delaying.

Conſider 1*ſt. The Sinner that will turn* Now *ſhall be happy.* Whatever thy Sins have been, ſuppoſe they were never ſo *many*, or never ſo *great*, if thou doſt turn *now*, God will pardon thy ſins and ſave thy ſoul. It may be that there is ſome ſinner that has ſecret fears and Queſtionings with himſelf, *If I ſhould turn from my evil way, would God accept of ſo* great a *ſinner as I have been?* I Anſwer, If thou

thou wilt turn *now*, I do assure thee in His name, God will accept of thee. For His Word saith, *Behold* now *is the* accepted *time, behold* now *is the day of Salvation.* 2. Cor. 6. 2. Now, *Now*, is your time to turn to God if you would find Acceptance with Him, or desire to be saved. If thou dost not turn *now*, *just* now, its more than I or any man living can assure thee that ever thy soul shall be saved. Where do you find in Scripture that He that turns *to morrow*, shall be accepted? *Boast not thy self of* to morrow, *for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.* The Apostle says in the 3d Chapter to the *Hebrews*, *To day*, if you will hear his voice harden not your hearts. And again *to day*, and a *third* time *to day*. But he that will harden his heart against the voice of God in his Word calling him to Repentance *to day*, it may be will think of Repentance when it is too late.

Consider. 2. *That no man ever repented him that he turned to God too soon, but every man in the world either* has *or* shall *be sorry that he turned no sooner.* There never was an Instance of a man truly converted, who wished he had not been converted so soon. There have been some that have turned from Sin in their youth,

yea

yea, in their Childhood; ask any ſuch, doe you repent of your early Converſion, they will ſay no, but we wiſh we had turned a great deal ſooner. *Auſtin*, I remember ſaith, *Nimis ſero Te amare cæpi!* Alas O Lord, I began to love Thee later than I wiſh I had done. And there is no unconverted ſinner in the world, but he will one day wiſh that he had turned from his evil wayes ſooner. If ever the Lord give him Repentance unto life, then will he be ſorry in his heart, that he was ſo long before he had any ſaving acquaintance with God and with Jeſus Chriſt. *Paul* ſpeaketh ſorrowfully of his late Converſion. 1. *Cor.* 15. 8. *And laſt of all he was ſeen of me, as of one born out of due time.* He was troubled to think that he had lived ſo many years in the world before he knew Chriſt Or if a ſinner ſhall be ſo unhappy as to dye in his evil way, he will for ever wiſh, when it is too late, that he had hearkened to the Call of the Goſpel requiring him to turn Now. *Prov.* 1. 28. *Then ſhall they call upon me but I will not anſwer, they ſhall ſeek me early, but they ſhall not find me.* When the day of Grace is paſt, and when the day of life is ſpent and gone, Sinners will reflect upon themſelves with infinite anguiſh, and ſay, What Fools were we that did not turn from ſin in time, but now the ſun is ſet, and the day

is become dark over us *for ever.* Had we ſought after Reconciliation with God ſooner, we might have obtained it: but Wo and Alas for us, now it will never be.

Conſider 3. *In* other *matters men are unwilling either to delay, or to* be *delayed.* There is many a poor fooliſh ſinner, that if he does but hear of a *Play* to be acted, or any thing which is a matter of ſport and paſtime, he'll be early at it: He will not let ſlip the time, but rather be too ſoon than too late. But when he is called upon to look after the Salvation of his own ſoul, he puts that off from day to day, as if *that* could *never* be too late. In worldly matters, eſpecially if they be of moment, men have ſo much wiſdome as to diſpatch them out of hand. It was ſaid of *Boaz* when an affair that did greatly concern him was to be iſſued, *The man will not be at reſt until he hath finiſhed the thing this day.* Ruth. 3. 18. And yet as to the work of Repentance, and making their peace with God, than which nothing can be of greater Concernment, Sinners can be at reſt from day to day; nay, from *year to year*, tho that work be not finiſhed, nor ſo much as begun: How ſad is it to conſider! You cannot bear Delayes from others, yet muſt the great God bear Delayes from

from you? If any of you ſhould command his ſervant to do ſuch a work *preſently*, but he ſayes hee'l take his own time and not yours, how would you bear it! But when God commands you to turn *now*, will you take your own time and not God's to doe it? You cannot bear delayes from God himſelf: If men be in any diſtreſs, they are ready to ſay, Lord make haſt to our help! Hear us *ſpeedily*! Make no tarrying; Why then when God calls to you to turn from your evil way, make haſt and make no tarrying. If any amongſt you ſhould be in grievous tormenting pain, and ſhould cry unto God for help, but he ſhould put you off, and ſay, Twenty or thirty years I'le conſider about the matter; how impatient would you be! And will you then ſay to God, I'le turn from my evil wayes 20 or 30 years hence, whenas the Lord ſaith, Do it *NOW*.

4. Let Sinners ſadly Conſider *Whom they Gratifie, and whom they grieve by delaying their Converſion.* They pleaſe their greateſt enemy, and *diſ*pleaſe their beſt Friend. You cannot gratifie your Adverſary the Devil more: who is it that ſaith to you, Wilt thou think of turning from thy ſins? it will be ſoon enough for that hereafter. No one but the Devil or ſuch as are ſtirred up by him, will ſuggeſt ſuch a

thought unto thee. He knoweth that if he can but perſwade thee to delay thy Converſion a while longer, he ſhall make ſure of thy ſoul. He alwaies tells ſinners either that it is too *ſoon* for them to turn unto God, or elſe that it is too *late*. If he ſhould ſee thee in earneſt about that matter, he would ſay it is too late now: But as long as thou art careleſs about it, he ſaies it is too *ſoon*; thereby hoping to perſwade thee to delay until it be too late *indeed*, and then he will deride thee for thy Folly. So that if a man would ſtudy to gratifie the Devil, he could not do it more than by *Deferring his repentance*. But then, whom doe you *greive* thereby? All the *good* men that know thee are grieved for thee: thy neareſt Relations are ſo if they fear God. It may be thou haſt a Godly Father, or a godly Mother: They are grieved to ſee that thou doſt continue ſtill in thy natural unconverted eſtate. And the Angels of Heaven are grieved by thee. There is joy in the preſence of the Angels of God over one ſinner that repents, *Luk.* 15. 10. So that Sinners who delay their Repentance hinder the joy of Angels. And that which is yet ſader is, thou grieveſt the heart of God by thy delaying to turn again from thy evil way. The Lord (to ſpeak of Him after the manner of men) thinks the time long, and

is grieved that thou ſhouldſt ſlight his Calls, and diſregard his Commands for ſo long a time. He ſaith, *Waſh thine heart from wickedneſs*, ---- how long *ſhall vain thoughts lodge in thee?* Jer. 4. 14. And again *wilt thou not be made clean?* when *ſhall it once be? Chapt.* 13. 27. Yet again, hear another Scripture, *How long* will it be, e're they attain to innocency? *Hoſ.* 8. 5. *How long! When? How long?* The Spirit of God is grieved by thy long delayes. He looketh upon thy Delayes as Refuſals and flat Denials. He ſaith thou art unwilling to return, and that, thats the reaſon of thy delaying ſo long. This muſt needs grieve and provoke Him. And why wilt thou diſpleaſe that God who hath been ſo kind to thee?

Conſider 5. *The Infinite danger which is in mens Delaying their Converſion.* Every Sinner had need make haſte about this matter, becauſe a little Delay may coſt him his *Life.* The Angel ſaid to *Lot* (*Geneſ.* 19. 17.) *Eſcape for thy* Life, *look not behind thee, neither ſtay thou in all the plain; eſcape to the mountain leſt thou be conſumed.* So I ſay to thee, O ſinner, don't ſtay in thy preſent eſtate, but make haſt to Chriſt as for thy life, leſt if thou lag & linger the fire of *Hell* take hold on thee ſuddenly, and thou be conſumed. 'Tis a dangerous

thing for a man to deferr his Repentance tho but for one day. One days delay may coſt a man the Life of his ſoul. When *Michal* told *David*, ſaying, *If thou ſave not thy life to night*, to morrow *thou ſhalt be ſlain*, He went and fled and eſcaped. 1. *Sam.* 19. 11, 12. Thus O Sinner, If thou doſt not turn from thine Iniquities *this day*, it may be to morrow thou ſhalt be ſlain. So that it is a very dangerous thing for any man to put off his Repentance a *day* longer: becauſe of the uncertainty of life it is ſo. When once Death has given the fatal Blow, it's too late for the Sinner to think of turning and making his peace with GOD. *Iſai.* 38. 18. *They that go down into the* pit *cannot hope for thy truth.* The Sinner whoſe Body is gone down into the pit of *Death*, and whoſe ſoul is gone down into the pit of Eternal *Darkneſs*, cannot hope that he ſhall ever be Converted, or that ever his ſoul ſhall be ſaved. And who knoweth how ſoon the Arrow of Death may ſtrike him! The Thunder-bolt of Death may kill thee before another morning. Then turn from thy ſins *now*. I have diverſe times put you in mind of an Expreſſion of that famous Miniſter of Chriſt, Mr. *Bolton*, who would ſometimes ſay, *I would not be in my unconverted ſtate again one day, tho I might have all the world for it, leſt happly death*

ſhould

ſhould come upon me that day, and ſo my immortal ſoul be loſt for ever. And it is a dangerous thing for men to delay their Converſion, becauſe the longer they delay it, the more unlike are they ever to be converted. Sinner it is poſſible and moſt probable that *now or never* is thy time to repent in. The longer thou doſt delay, the more unwilling and the more unable to turn art thou like to be. For Satan will get faſter hold on thy ſoul; and the longer he has held his Poſſeſſion the more difficult will his Departure be. We read of one in the Goſpel, that the Divel was caſt out of him with exceeding Difficulty, and when it was aſked *how long is it ago ſince this came to him?* Anſwer was made, *of a* child. *Mar.* 9. 21. Thus where the Divel has a long time held his poſſeſſion of a ſoul, its a hard matter to get him out. And *SIN* as well as Sathan will have deeper rooting and ſtronger hold on the ſoul, if Converſion be delayed. The ſins of men are like Bonds upon their ſouls, It was ſaid to *Simon Magus*, *Thou art in the* bond *of iniquity.* Now the longer men continue in ſin, the ſtronger do they make that woful bond: they will find their ſouls ſo fetter'd in the bloody chains of ſin, as that it will be a wonder if ever they get looſe *Jer.* 13. 23. *Can the Ethiopian change his ſkin, or the Leopard his*

ſpots? then may ye alſo do good that are accuſtomed to do evil. Can it be? it would be ſtrange if it ſhould: Such a thing will be a kind of a Miracle. The ſinner is in a grave: Every Sin he doth commit is as it were another ſtone caſt upon that grave which will make his Reſurrection the more difficult. And there is infinite danger in mens delaying their Converſion, leſt God ſhould ſay of them as He did of the old world of ungodly ones, who deferred their Repentance. *Gen.* 6. 3. *My ſpirit ſhall not alwayes ſtrive with man.* Or as it was ſaid of *Jeruſalem*, Ezek. 24. 13. *Becauſe I have purged thee, and thou waſt not purged, thou ſhalt not be purged from thy filthineſs any more, till I have cauſed my fury to reſt upon thee.* It may be thy delayes may provoke God to inflict *ſpiritual* Judgments upon thee; to give thee up to *judicial Blindneſs* and *Hardneſs of heart.* There is a moſt awful paſſage in the *Evangelical* Prophet *Iſaiah*, which Scripture is often mentioned in the New-Teſtament, to ſhew that Sinners under the Goſpel are greatly Concerned in it, Viz. that *Chapt.* 6. 10. *Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and ſhut their eyes; leſt they ſee with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and underſtand with their heart, and convert and be healed.* If God ſhould ſay of thee, There's ſuch a ſinner, I have a long

long time called upon him by the Miniſtry of the Word, to turn from his evil way, but he has delay'd his Repentance from one year to another; therefore I am now reſolved that he ſhall *never* be converted, and that my Word for the future ſhall have no other effect upon him but to harden his heart and aggravate his eternal Condemnation. I ſay, if God ſhould thus reſolve concerning *thee*, He would be *juſt*, and thou for ever *miſerable*. O tremble leſt thy ſinful delayes ſhould provoke the Lord to ſay of *thee*, as He did of the barren Fig tree *Mat.* 21. 19. *Let no fruit grow on thee hence forward for ever.*

Conſider, 6. *How many ſouls have been eternally ruined by delayes.* We read of *Felix* what *Convictions* and what an awakned Conſcience he had under *Paul*'s Preaching: He had ſad thoughts with himſelf that except he did repent, and turn from his Intemperance and his unrighteous way, it would go ill with him at the day of *Judgement*; But *Delayes* proved the Ruin of his ſoul: He ſaid *go thy way for this time, and when I have a convenient ſeaſon I will ſend for thee.* Act. 24. 25. And thus it is with moſt of them that periſh under the Goſpel. There are few men that live under the powerful diſpenſation of the Goſpel,

but

but they have Convictions: They know they muſt repent of ſin, but they purpoſe to do it *hereafter*; and ſo by deferring the matter, their ſouls are eternally ruin'd e're they are aware. Hell is full of *delaying* Sinners. The Devil has not a greater ſtratagem to ruin ſouls by than this. He that will never repent while *to morrow*, will *never* repent at all. Therefore the Devil's great Deſign is, to perſwade the Sinner ſtill to deferr his Repentance until *to-morrow*, that ſo it may *never* be.

Let theſe Conſiderations awaken every one that is in a State of Sin, *Now* to turn and live. There are ſome of you that have continued a long time in a natural unregenerate eſtate: Perhaps you have lived in the world, 30, or 40, or it may be *ſixty* years, and in an unconverted eſtate to this day. It is time to ſeek the Lord. 'Tis high time for you to conſider your wayes and to look about you. Think not with thy ſelf, I'le repent when I come to lye down upon my ſick bed. How doſt thou know that thou ſhalt lie upon a ſick bed at all? It may be ſome ſudden Stroak will take thee out of the world, and where will thy ſoul be *then*? Or if thou ſhouldeſt be viſited with Sickneſs, that's no ſuitable time to repent in. perhaps thou wilt then *lie unto God with thy mouth, and*

flatter

flatter him with thy lips. Sick-bed-Repentance is very ſeldome true. How often do we ſee, that Sinners on ſick beds make fair promiſes, to God and man, but when they are recovered they become as bad or worſe than ever they were before. Yes, and it may be then thou wilt cry out, *it is too late now.* Did you never hear of a man who delaying his Repentance till he came to lie upon his ſick bed, when he was told he muſt repent of ſin, replyed, *all too late*: and when he was exhorted to pray unto God for pardon of his paſt tranſgreſſions, he made the ſame reply, *All to late!* If I had hearkned to this Counſil ſooner, it had been happy for me, but *all's too late now!* If thou delayeſt thy Repentance till then, perhaps this will be thy bitter Cry when thou ſhalt feel thy departing ſoul going into the other world.

And You that are young, Remember what the Scripture ſaith, *Thou ſhalt not delay to offer the* firſt *of thy ripe fruits.* Exod. 22. 29. I beſeech, I exhort, I charge every ſoul of you, who are yet in your ſins, that you *Turn NOW.* Say not, but *then I muſt never ſee merry day more.* Suppoſe that were true; Is it not better to live a mournful life in this world for a ſhort time, and then to be in *fulneſs of joy*, and to have *pleaſures for evermore*, than to live *a ſhort life and a merry*, but afterwards thy ſoul

to

to ſmoke for it in the ever-burning lake? I have read of a man who when he lay on his Death-bed, uttered this Expreſſion, *I have enjoyed the pleaſures of Sin for a ſhort ſeaſon, and now I muſt be in torment for it, for more than millions of millions of ages.* Oh conſider of it. And remember alſo, that no man has any true joy or ſolid Comfort, in any thing until ſuch time as he hath turned from his ſins, and made his peace with God, through Jeſus Chriſt.

To Direct and Help you here,

1. *Practiſe that great Duty of Self-Examination.* Look into thy heart and way, and ſee if there be not ſome ſin, which thou muſt of neceſſity turn *from*, or dye *for* it. Some, their Sins are ſo notorious that they ca'nt but know that they live in ſin. Swearers, Sabbath-breakers, Drunkards, unclean perſons and ſuch like, they cannot but know that they muſt Repent or periſh. But then there be others, who are of a civil, blameleſs Converſation before men, and theſe are more apt to be deceived. But ſearch thy heart, and perhaps thou wilt find that Sin *reigns* there. It may be there is ſome ſin of Commiſſion which thou liveſt in, which thy heart delights in. Or ſome ſin of *Omiſſion*, perhaps thou doſt live in the Neglect

of Prayer from day to day, *Lam.* 3. 40. *Let us ſearch and try our waies, and turn again to the Lord.* If men would ſearch impartially, they would be more likely to turn. Alas many do not turn, becauſe they think that work is done already; whenas they have turned only from *ſome* ſins, and not from *all*. Take heed leſt ſome ſecret unknown ſin which thou art unwilling to ſee prove the ruin of thy ſoul. O for the Lords ſake be not deceived: And therefore examine your own hearts and eſtates before the Lord.

2. *Set your ſelves to conſider ſeriouſly of thoſe things wherein your ſouls, and everlaſting eſtates are concerned.* Sinners are apt to put off all good Exhortations, by ſaying, *they cannot convert themſelves.* True, but you may uſe the meanes; of which Serious Conſideration is none of the leaſt. You may *Conſider* and *Ponder* of things between God and your own ſouls if you will; and who knoweth but that the effect of it may be Converſion. David mentions this as the reaſon of his Turning into the wayes of God. *Pſal.* 119. 59, 60. *I* thought *on my wayes and* turned *my feet unto thy Teſtimonies: I made haſte and* delayed not *to keep thy Commandments.* If men would *think*, belike they would *turn.* Serious Conſideration

Consideration would cause them to make haste and not delay their Repentance. The sinners in *Samaria* persisted in their evil way, why? it is said, *They* consider *not in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness*, *Hos.* 7. 2. If a Sinner would goe alone and *consider* in his heart that God has taken notice of all his sins, and will one day Call him to an account for every one of them, without Repentance; it may be that would awaken him so, as that he would immediately turn from his evil way. Oh that you would go alone, & think with your selves, every one of you that are yet in your sins, If I should dy this night what would become of my poor soul? If a sinner would but consider the danger that he is in; and that his immortal soul is hanging over the mouth of Hell only by the rotten thread of a frail life, if that break, (as it may the next moment) down falls his soul into the Bottomless pit. I say, if sinners would but *consider* this, they would surely make as great hast out of their sins, as ever *Lot* did out of *Sodom*.

3. *In the Lord's Name and strength, take up a firm Resolution* now *to turn from sin.* There are many that have faint purposes that way, but they do'nt come up to a full Resolution. *Austin* in his *Confessions* acknowledgeth that it was so with him; He had thoughts of turning

Turning from his evil way, but ſtill put it off, until GOD came in mightily upon his heart, as he read that Scripture *Rom.* 13. 11, 12. *Now it is high time to awake out of ſleep, the night is far ſpent the day is at hand, &c.* And then he ſaid, *Why not* NOW *Lord? I have thought with my ſelf many a time, I would turn from my evil way, ſometime* hereafter, *but why not* now *Lord?* and from that hour he was fixedly and for ever reſolved againſt every ſin.

O let thy heart within thee reſolve ſo too. And therefore reſolve *now* upon Prayer to God that it may be ſo. Reſolve to continue praying as *Ephraim* did, *Turn thou me O Lord, and I ſhall be turned.*

There

There shall be a Day of Judgement.

MATTH. X. 15.

It shall be more tolerable for the Land of Sodom *and* Gomorrha *in the Day of Judgement, than for that City.*

IN this Chapter we have both the *Commission*, and the *Instructions* which the Apostles received from the Lord Jesus Christ, when they were first sent forth to preach the Gospel. The Lord instructed them unto whom they should first go and make a tender of the Gospel: Only to the *Jewes*, and not to the *Gentiles*, until such time as it would be seen whether the Jewes would accept thereof or no. In the preceding verse the Lord directs them how they should behave themselves towards

towards such as would reject them and their Doctrine, *viz.* that they should shake off the dust of their feet against them; and we find that in after times the Apostles practised accordingly. *Act.* 13. 51. Whereby they declared that they looked upon such Persons tho' *Israelites*, as prophane and as abominable as any Heathen, and therefore such as they would no more hold Communion with; but that they would go away from them, and carry the Gospel to others who would give it a better Reception. The Jewes looked upon the very earth or dust which was brought out of Heathen Lands to be impure, yea, as unclean as the Ashes of a dead Carcase which they might not touch. Hence by shaking the dust of their feet against them, they would signifie that they were such Sinners as did defile the very ground they trod upon, and so as abominable as any Heathen.

In this verse there are Two Things contained,

1. A Declaration of the grievous punishment which shall come upon them that despise the Gospel. It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha than for such. *Sodom* and *Gomorrha* are instanc'd in, because they were made the most terible Example of Divine Ven-

Vengeance that ever was in the world.

2. When this punishment shall be inflicted, *viz.* At the Day of Judgment. Hence the words are spoken in the future Tense: 'Tis not said, it *is*, but it *shall be* more tolerable for Sodom & Gomorrha, so that a Punishment *yet to come* on the Sodomites is spoken of.

The Words afford unto us several Doctrines, I shall only mention *Three* as being the principal.

DOCT. 1. *That there shall be a day of Judgment.*

Doct. 2. *That at the day of Judgment all sinners shall not suffer alike, but some will have a farr more intolerable Punishment than* others *shall.*

Doct. 3. *That they who have despised the Offer of the Gospel shall at the Day of Judgment fall under the heaviest* CONDEMNATION.

At present only concerning the first of these Doctrines, Viz. *That there shall be a day of Judgment.*

For the clearing of this Doctrine, there are three things to be enquired into. 1. How it does appear that there shall be such a day. 2. What kind of day it will be. 3. The Reason why there must be such a day.

Quest. 1. *How does it appear that there shall be*

be a Day of Judgement?

ANSW. 1. *The Scripture does abundantly bear witness to this truth.* In the Old Testament there are many Testimonies concerning a Judgment *to come.* So in the Book of Psalms: as in *Psal.* 50. 3, 4. and 96. 13. not to mention other places. And the Prophets, in special *Isaiah*, *Daniel*, *Malachi* speak expressly and distinctly of this Judgment. Hence the *Jews* themselves acknowledge that there will be a general Day of Judgement. But in the *New Testament* this (as well as many other great Truths) is more clearly and abundantly made known. Yea, the *Form* of Judgment is there described, as in the Latter end of the twenty fifth Chapter of *Matthew* we may see.

2. *The Light of Nature, and that Conscience which is in men, sheweth that there must needs be a Judgement to come.* Conscience is a mans judgment of himself, as subjected to the Judgment of God. The Apostle sheweth that the Gentiles doe by nature the things contained in the Law; their Conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts accusing or excusing *in the mean while* h. e. until the day come that God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ. *Rom.* 2. 15. 16. Before the great day of Judgment come, they are judging and

impleading themſelves, There is a day of judgement kept in the Conſcience, which proveth that God will have a Day of Judgement for all men. If men were not to be judged by *God*, they would never enter into judgement with *themſelves*. Hence there are ſecret, awful fears upon the ſpirits of Sinners with reſpect unto this Day: Yea ſometimes in the *worſt* of ſinners. When *Felix* heard *Paul* reaſoning concerning Righteouſneſs and Temperance and *JUDGMENT to come*. he trembled. *Act.* 24. 25. Eſpecially when Sinners ly upon ſick-beds, and Death-beds, Conſcience tells them they muſt appear before the Judgment ſeat of the GREAT GOD and anſwer for all the evils they have done. Or if men commit any great ſin, conſcience tells them they muſt to Judgment for that ſin. He that ſhall tell a Lye againſt his Conſcience, or commit any ſuch grievous ſin, has that in his own breaſt (a *Conſcience*.) which is a Preacher of Judgement to him, becauſe of that Sin.

3. *The Providence of God does ſo order matters in the World, as that we may from thence conclude that there will be a Day of Judgment.*

e. g. He permits *wrong* Judgment to paſs among men in the world. *Guilty* men are here *acquitted*, and innocent men are oftentimes

condemned

condemned. Pſal. 44. 21. Solomon did from that Conſideration conclude, that things will one day be called over again, and another Judgment be paſſed by Him who is the Supream and righteous JUDGE of all the world. *Eccleſ.* 3. 16. Great and Heinous ſinners do ſometimes eſcape puniſhment, not only from men, but from the Hand of God in this world. Though ſome ſuch are puniſhed to ſhew there is a Providence, yet others eſcape to ſhew that there is a Judgment to come, 1. *Tim.* 5. 24.

Queſt. 2. *What kind of day will the* Day of Judgment *be?*

Anſw. 1. *It will be a* great *Day.* *Jude* ſpeaketh of *the Judgment of the* great *day.* ver. 6. Hence it is called *that day.* 2. *Tim.* 1. 12. There never was ſuch a day *before*, and there never ſhall be ſuch a day *after* this. It is ſtyled *the day of God.* 2. *Pet.* 3. 10, 12. Great & eminent things are expreſſed by the Name of *God* in Scripture.

It will be a great day, 1*ſt.* In reſpect of the great *Multitude* which then ſhall be judged; The whole world: *God hath appointed a day wherein He will judge the* world. *Act.* 17. 31. Whole Nations, yea *all* Nations ſhall be gathered before His Judgement ſeat. *Mat.* 25. 32. Not only ſuch as ſhall be found alive on the

earth, when the Judge shall come down from Heaven, but such as are *dead*, whose souls have been Thousands of years either in Heaven or Hell, must then to Judgement. 2. Tim. 4. 1. What a great day will that be, when all the men that ever were in the world or that ever shall be, must every mothers Child of them appear before the Judgment Seat of the great GOD! All *good* men shall be *judged* tho' not condemned. *Mat.* 25. 34. And all *wicked* men, *Rev.* 20. *The sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them, & they were judged every man according to their works.* Nay, the *Angels* that have sinned shall then be judged. They are reserved for everlasting Chains unto the judgement of that great day. Therefore it is that the Apostate Angels tremble at the thought of this day: When they saw the Son of God they cryed and roared and said, *Art thou come to torment us before our time? Mat.* 8. 29. They know that there are hotter chains reserved for them, than those which at present they are in; and the dismal thought thereof makes all the Devils in Hell to tremble.

2. The day of Judgement will be a day of great *Discovery*. Hence it is called a *day*. In the Night things ly hid, but in the day they are discovered: So in the dark night of this

present

present world, many things are unseen and unknown which then all the world shall see & know. *Luc.* 12. 2. It will be a day of great discovery in respect of the works and Dispensations of God. Hence 'tis called a *day of Revelation.* Rom. 2. 5. The Works of Creation and the Mystery of Redemption, and the strange Mysteries of Providence, and Wisdom, and Righteousnes of God in all, will then be revealed to the Admiration of men and Angels for ever. There will also be a great Discovery of *men* in that day. The Spiritual and Eternal estates of all (which are now known to God onely) will then be made manifest to the whole world. It will be seen who were sheep and who were goats: who were Wheat and who were Tares; who were wise and who were fooliſh Virgins. Many that have made a great Profession, that walked in Fellowship with the people of God, that sate down with them at the Lord's Table, will then be found standing at the left hand of Jesus Christ, and their Hypocrisie discovered. And it will be a Day of great Discovery, as to the *Workes* of men. *Eccles.* 12. 14. *For God shall bring every work into Judgement, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.* Secret Thefts, secret Uuncleanesses, Secret Adultries, all will come out, and the whole

World shall hear of those things at the day of Judgment. Yea; the very *thoughts* of men will be discovered. The secrets of all hearts will be discloſed in that day 1. *Cor.* 4. 5. The good Deſignes and gracious purpoſes which have been in the hearts of holy men, the Lord Jeſus will then reveal them and ſpeak of them to their praiſe, before all the World. And the evil purpoſes, and wicked thoughts which have been in the hearts of ungodly men ſhall then be told of, to their everlaſting ſhame.

2. *The Day of Judgement will be to the Unbeleeving world a moſt* terrible *day.* Hence it is expreſſed in the Scripture by that of *the terrour of the Lord*, 2. *Cor.* 5. 11. There have bin terrible *Types*, & forerunners of this dreadful day. Thoſe leſſer days of judgment, which have been in the world, when God has called whole Nations to an account, and executed Judgment upon them, were Types and forerunners of the General Judgment; and thence are in the Scripture ſet forth by Expreſſions which are moſt proper to the great and laſt Judgement. The Terrour of this day no heart is able to conceive, nor tongue able to expreſs. But it appears eſpecially in 4 particulars.

1. In that it will be a *Fiery* day. This viſible

viſible World is ſubject to a *two-fold* Deſtruction, one by Water, the other by Fire: that by water was accompliſh'd on the old world in the Dayes of *Noah*; the other by Fire will take place at the day of Judgment. 2. *Pet.* 3. 7. *The Heavens & the earth are reſerved unto* fire *againſt the day of judgement.* & ver. 12. *Looking for the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire ſhall be diſſolved, & the Elements ſhall melt with fervent heat.* The Scriptures both of the Old and of the New Teſtament ſpeak of this fire. *Pſal.* 50. 3. *Iſai.* 66. 15, 16. The Day of Judgment will begin with flaming fire. *Dan.* 7. 9, 10. 2. Theſ. 1. 8. Yea, and *end* ſo too, *Rev.* 20. 9. Now what a terrible day will that be, when all the earth ſhall burn at once, and the Heavens be all on a light flame alſo!

2. There will be the moſt terrible, amazing *noiſe* that ever was heard in the world. 2. *Pet.* 3. 10. *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens ſhall paſs away with a great noiſe.* The very *noiſe* of the fire which then ſhall prevail every where will be terrible to hear. If a Town be on fire, what a noiſe does it make! The Rattling of the Flames is terrible to hear. But what then will it be, when all the *World* ſhall be on fire! What an amazing noiſe will thoſe rattling

flames

flames make all the World over! And there will be then the most terrible Thundrings and Lightnings that ever were known. If when the Lord came down to publish the Law on mount Sinai, there were Thunderings and Lightnings, so that all the people in the camp trembled; how much more when He shall come to *judge* the *breakers* of that Law. And what fearful out-cries and roaring Lamentations will amazed Sinners make in every Corner of the world! As undoubtedly they did in the Old World, when they saw that the *windows* from on high were opened, and there was no escaping that flood of death which was round about them. So it will be much more when Sinners shall behold a flood, a River, a *Sea* of *FIRE and Brimstone* that they cannot goe from.

3. At the Day of Judgement there will be the most terrible *Destruction* and *Devastation* that ever was. All the *wicked* in the world shall then be destroyed. *Mal.* 4. 1. *For behold the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea and all that* do wickedly *shall be stubble, and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts,* Therefore the day of Judgment is called *the day of Perdition of ungodly men.* 2. *Pet.* 3. 7. And there will be a terible Destruction, not only of men but of other

other creatures in that day, *wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat.* ver. 12. The Greek word translated *Elements* is *stoikeia*, which signifieth *Hosts*: All the Host of creatures which are in this lower heaven shall at the day of judgment be no more able to live than if they were (as indeed they shall be in) a furnace of fire, whose fervent heat cannot be endured. And the Apostle saith, that *the earth also, and the workes which are therein shall be burnt up.* There are living creatures thereon, Beasts of the field, and creeping things. There are works of Nature, Trees, Herbs &c. And there are works of Art, Houses, Towns, Cities, &c. These shall all be consumed at the last day. What a terrible day will that be when there shall not be a house left standing in all the world!

4. The Day of judgment will be concluded with the Pronunciation and Execution of a most terrible Sentence upon all Christless Sinners. The man whom God has ordained to to judge the world, (*h. e.* his Son *Jesus Christ*) will then pronounce a Sentence of *eternal death* upon as many as shall be found in their Sins. How will their Hearts ake, and every joint Tremble, when they shall hear that Sentence wherein every word does breathe

breathe forth Death and fire *Mat.* 25 41. *Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.* There will be no appealing from this Sentence, nor shall it ever be reversed. And the Sentence will no sooner be pronounced, but Execution will be done immediately. For the angels of Heaven will be all standing by, and see it done forthwith. The Sentence is, That sinners must be *burnt to death for ever*, that they must be thrown *alive* into the lake which burns with fire and Brimstone. The Holy Angels will see this done. They are the Reapers that shall gather the Tares together, and bind them in bundles to burn them. *Mat.* 13. 30.

3. *The day of Judgement will be unto true Beleevers on Jesus Christ a* good *Day*. It will be to them a day of Rejoicing *Phil.* 2. 16. A *comfortable day*, 1. Thes. 4. 18. For,

1. It will be to *them* a day of *Salvation Heb.* 9. 28 And indeed, The Salvation of believers is not consummated before that day. Its true, that their souls are in perfect Blessedness as soon as they depart out of this world. Therefore the Apostle speakes of the *Spirits of just men made perfect*. *Heb* 12. 23. But their Bodies are not glorified until the Day of Judgdment, not till the Resurrection at the last day; which

is

is therefore called *the day of Redemption*, *Eph.* 4. 30. *Rom.* 8. 23. When that bleſſed day ſhall dawn upon the world, the Saints of God ſhall never more be ſubject to any miſery. It will be a *time of refreſhing* from the preſence of the Lord, *Act.* 3. 19. A time of *Reſt.* 2. Theſ. 1. 7. And there ſhall be no more ſorrow. *Rev.* 21. 4.

2. Believers ſhall at the Day of Judgement be publickly abſolved and acquitted from the guilt of all their ſins. A ſentence of *Abſolution* will be paſſed upon them. They will be pronounced bleſſed; and there are none bleſſed but they whoſe ſins are forgiven. *Mat.* 25. 34. Hence the Scripture ſpeaketh of Sins being forgiven in the world to come, *h. e.* at the Day of Judgement. *Mat.* 12. 32. It is Controverted amongſt Divines, whether the ſecret ſins of Believers will be at all ſpoken of at the day of Judgement: Some think they ſhall *not*, becauſe that would tend to their Reproach and ſhame. But there is much to be ſaid for the Affirmative, that they ſhall *ſome* of them be ſpoken of: For ſome of the Elect of God did commit their ſins with ſuch as are Reprobate; now if the ſins of theſe Reprobate muſt be ſpoken of, then muſt the Sins of the *Elect*, who had Fellowſhip with them in their wickedneſs; but then they ſhall

not

not be condemned, nor any reproach cast upon them for what they have done. In point of condemnation they shall be as if they had never sinned. *There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. Rom.* 8. 1. There was Condemnation to them before they were in Christ, but since that, there neither is nor ever shall be any Condemnation to them. They are without fault before the Throne, before the judgement seat of God. *Rev.* 14. 5. The Lord will in the day of judgment, declare that their sins are blotted out, They don't remain upon record in God's book against them *Act.* 3. 19. The Lord Jesus will then say to the true Believer, Tho' thou wast guilty of many and great sins, yet because I dyed for thee, and thou didst believe on me, thy sins are all forgiven, and therefore do thou rejoice for ever.

3. Beleevers shall at the day of judgment be as so many Kings with Crowns on their heads. *Know you not that the Saints shall judg the world?* 1. Cor. 6. 2. A Sceptre shall be put into their hands *Rev.* 2. 26,27. *to him that overcometh will I give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron.* i. e. with a sceptre, They shall reign on the earth then, *Rev.* 5. 10 There are great disputes concerning the reign of Saints on the earth: Nothing is more clearly

clearly expressed in the Scripture than that the Saints of God shall one day possess a glorious Kingdom *Luk.* 22. 29. And their Kingdom they shall not have in heaven only, but in this lower visible world. *under the whole heaven:* Dan. 7. 27. In the place where they served God and where they suffered for his Sake there they shall reign. But they must not look for a Temporal Dominion in this world: They must stay till the *Resurrection*, and the day of judgment, and then they shall reign. *In the morning.* i.e. in the morning of the day of judgment or at the resurection *the upright shall have Dominion Psal.* 49. 14. *In the Regeneration* (whereby the Resurrection is intended) *they shall sit upon thrones* Mat. 19. 28. Tho Christ only shall pass the Sentence of death upon the reprobate world, yet the Saints shall sit with Him upon Thrones of judgement, as Assistors and Aprobators of that judgement.

Quest. 3. *Why must there be a day of Judgment?*

ANSW. 1. Reas. *That so the glory of the Divine Attributes may be cleared and vindicated.* To vindicate the HOLINESS of GOD Because He is patient and long-suffering sinners conclude that He is not so

Holy

Holy as he is, that he does not hate Sin with ſuch an infinite hatred and indignation as indeed He does: Therefore the Lord will have a day of Judgement that ſo all men might ſee that He is glorious in Holineſs, *Pſal.* 50. 21. And to clear the *Juſtice* of God; Great ſinners do ſometimes proſper in the world: But therefore a day of Judgment muſt come wherein God will bring them forth and deal with them for all their wickedneſs. *Job.* 21. 7. *Wherefore do the wicked live, yea become mighty in power?* Ver. 30, *The wicked is reſerved to the day of deſtruction, they ſhall be brought forth in the day of wrath.* If they eſcape puniſhment here, they ſhall have the greater puniſhment in the day of judgement, which is called *the day of wrath.* So will the Juſtice of God be cleared for ever. Hence it is called a day of *the revelation of the righteous judgement of God. Rom.* 2. 5. q. d. The Righteouſneſs of God is not yet clearly revealed, but it *ſhall* be at that day. Then alſo will the Truth and Faithfulneſs of God be vindicated. There are many Threatnings in the Word of God againſt wicked men, and many Promiſes to the Righteous. The Summe and Scope of the whole Bible is declared in thoſe few words, *Iſai.* 3. 10, 11. *Say to the righteous, that it ſhall be well with him; Woe to the wicked it*

ſhall

shall be ill with him. whenas for the present we see it not so: As to outward concerns it goeth *well* with the wicked, and *ill* with the Righteous. Should good men have nothing but what they receive in this world, they would many times *be of all men the most miserable.* 1. *Cor.* 15. 19 Therefore there must be a Resurrection and a day of judgement. Things at present are very much out of order. The proud are called happy; and such as fear God are trampled upon by the foot of Pride. Hence there must be a day of judgement when all things shall be set to rights: which may be the reason why the day of judgement is called *the time of the restitution of all things.* Act. 3. 21. Thus will the glory of God be vindicated, in the sight and hearing of Heaven and Earth.

Reas. 3. *There must be a day of judgement that so* Jesus Christ, *the son of God may be glorified before all men and Angels.* For Christ is the person whom God the Father has appointed to be the Judge of the World. *Act.* 17. 31. *He hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom He hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance to all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead* Christ's Resurrection is an evidence of this. His Exaltation began in his Resurrection: we

may from thence conclude that the laſt degree of His Exaltation. which is in His ſitting to judge the world at the great Day, will in the appointed time take place. It is ſaid concerning *Joſhuah*, (who in that as well as in many other reſpects was a Type of Chriſt) *On that day the Lord magnified Joſhuah in the ſight of all Iſrael. Chapt.* 4. 14. So on the Day of Judgement, God will magnifie His Son Jeſus Chriſt in the ſight of all the world. God will have all the world to know, that His Son is more than a man; that the honour due to God ſhall be given to him. Therefore hath He made Him the Judge of all. *Joh.* 5. 22, 23. *The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgement to his Son, that all men ſhould honour the ſon*, even as *they honour the Father ther.* Moreover, Chriſt will come to judge the world in greateſt State, Majeſty and Glory that ever was, or that can be conceived. *Mat.* 24. 30. *They ſhall ſee the Son of man coming in power and in great GLORY.* Hence His ſecond Coming is called His *glorious appearance, Tit.* 2. 13. He will command an *Herauld* to blow the Trumpet, and to ſummon all the world to appear before Him; and this Herauld ſhall be no leſs than an *Angel*, yea an *Arch*-Angel, 1. *Theſ.* 4. 16. *For the Lord Himſelfe ſhall deſcend from heaven with a ſhout, with the the voice*

voice of the Arch-Angel *and with the trump of God.* A most glorious Retinue will then attend and wait upon Him. All the *Angels* in heaven shall come down from thence to wait upon the Son of God in that Day, *Mat.* 25. 31. *The Son of man shall come in his glory and all the holy Angels with Him.* Hence *Daniel* in his Vision of the Day of Judgement, beheld a Thousand Thousand ministring to Him, and ten Thousand times ten Thousand stood before him. Yea, and all the *Saints* in heaven shall come down from thence to wait upon the blessed Son of God. 1. *Thes.* 3. 13. *At the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His* Saints. Yet more, All the Saints then found alive on the Earth, shall be miraculously caught up into the Air, to meet the Lord at His coming, *Chapt* 4. 17. As when a great Person is coming to this or that place, many go out to meet him; so when the Son of God shall visit this lower world with His Personal presence, all the Saints on Earth shall *meet Him* in the Air. And this may be the true meaning of that Scripture *Luk.* 17, 34. where Christ saith *In that night there shall be two men in one bed, the one shall be taken and the other left.* One shall be taken and caught up by the holy Angels to meet the Lord Jesus in the air, and the other shall be left to perish in that Fire

which ſhall then conſume the world. Moreover, At the Day of Judgement, the Son of GOD ſhall ſit upon a moſt *glorious Throne*, Matth. 25. 31. *Then ſhall He ſit upon the throne of His glory*, that is to ſay, His moſt *glorious* Throne: So that He will reign then viſibly before the world. It is moſt true, that Chriſt reigns now in *Heaven*, but the greateſt part of the Children of men in this world, do not know nor believe that: But therefore at the Day of judgment He ſhall reign in the *viſible, lower* world. *Jer.* 23. 5. *A King ſhall reign and proſper and execute Judgment and juſtice in the earth.* Chriſt's Judging the world belongs to his *Kingly* Office, *Math.* 25. 34. Hence the Diſpenſation of Judgment is called *His Kingdom*, 2. *Tim.* 4. 1. The holy Prophets of Old have ſpoken *magnificently* concerning the Reign and Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*. At the Day of Judgment the Truth of all thoſe divine Predictions ſhall be manifeſt to *all men*. Then will Chriſt appear to be the greateſt and moſt *glorious* Monarch that ever was. The world has look'd upon the King of *Perſia* as a mighty Monarch, becauſe he reigned over a hundred and ſeven and twenty Provinces, *Eſt.* 1. 1. But Chriſt ſhall reign over *all* Nations, from one end of the earth to the other. There ſhall be given to Him Dominion

Dominion and glory, and a Kingdom that *all People, Nations and Languages* should serve Him, His Dominion is an everlasting Dominion which shall not pass away. The Lord shall be King over *all the earth*, in that day there shall be one LORD, and His Name One.

Reas. 3. *There must be a Day of Judgement with respect to the* Saints *of God*, That so they may be vindicated from those Reproaches which are cast upon them in the world. The best of men, and those that are most dear to Christ, are oftentimes most reproached and abused. Wicked men speak all maner of evil aginst them *falsly*. And it may be their names are never cleared in *this* world; but therefore the Day of Judgment must come to clear all, *Psal.* 37. 6. *Commit thy way to God, and He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, & thy judgment as the noon day.* This is one reason why good men are so patient under those vile reproaches which are cast upon them; it is because they know that at the day of judgement, the LORD whom they serve will vindicate them. *With me* (sayes the Apostle) *it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of mans judgment; He that judgeth me is the Lord.* 1. *Cor.* 4. 3, 4. And a Day of Judgment must come that so the Lord's faithful

Ones may be rewarded for all that they have done or ſuffered for God and for the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. For then God will give Reward to them that fear His Name, ſmall and great. *Rev.* 11. 18. And they that have ſuffered for His ſake ſhall then reign with Him.

USE. Let every ſoul endeavour to be prepared for this Day. A Day of Judgement will come. All that are wiſe will make it their chief endeavour to give up their Account with joy and not with grief *in that Day.*

Conſider. 1. *That all and every one of us muſt make our perſonal appearance, before that dreadful Tribunal.* 2. Cor. 5. 10. *We muſt all appear before the judgement ſeat of Chriſt.* O do you think of that! All in this Congregation, every Mothers Child; and throughout the whole world, High and Low, Rich and Poor, Old and Young they muſt *all* to judgement. *Rev.* 22. 12. *I ſaw the dead ſmall and great ſtand before God; and the books were opened, and the dead were judged out of thoſe things which were written in the books, according to their workes.* Whoever thou art, God will have thee to judgment, *Eccleſ.* 11. 9. *Know thou, God will bring thee to judgement.* Therefore it will be a vain thing for any ſinner to think he ſhall eſcape. If God that made Heaven and earth *will* bring him into judgment, how ſhall

he

he escape? Not a soul of man shall escape the Tryal. The Great God has resolv'd, and said, and sworn, that every one shall come before His Tribunal. *Rom.* 14. 10, 11, 12. *We shall all stand before the judgement seat of Christ; For it is written, as I live saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to mee and every tongue shall confess to God: So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.* If but *one man* should escape apearing, the Oath of God must be broken, which is impossible. O man, as sure as the Lord liveth, thon shalt stand before his judgment seat, and be tryed and judged, either to *everlasting Life*, or *everlasting Death.*

Consider, 2. *That at the day of judgment, men must be called to a very particular and strict Acconnt.* All the Actions of their Lives must then be look'd over. The things which they did whilst their souls continued in their bodies, they must be accountable for them. *God shall bring every work into judgment. Eccles.* 12. 14. Yea, they must be called to account for their words: So has Truth himself declared, *Mat.* 12. 36. *I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the Day of judgement.* How much more shall men give account for *wicked* words, for *unclean, filthy* words, for *ly*

lying words, for *Oaths* and *Curses*, and *Blasphemies* which they have poured forth out of an evil mouth. And what a dreadful account will many Sinners have to give up for these things in the day of judgment! Yea, men shall be called to an account in that day, not only for all that they have done, but for all they have *received*. It is said in the *Parable* concerning the *Talents*, *after a long time the Lord of those servants cometh and reckoneth with them.* Matth. 25. 19. Whatever Talents God shall entrust any man withal, *first* or *last* a day of reckoning will come. The Lord Jesus will say to some at the great Day, You had such Estates in the world, but what did you do with your Riches? did you improve them for God, or did you not abuse them for sin and to dishonour His Name? He'le say to another; Thou hadst a Talent of understanding, thou hadst Wit and Memory and Learning above many others, but how didst thou make use of thy parts? He will say to another, You enjoyed the meanes of grace, you heard many Sermons: Did not you live in *New-England?* and whose Ministry did you live under there? What account can you now give concerning all the Sermons which you have heard? Did you repent of Sin and believe on the Son of God, and deny all Ungodliness

Ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and live ſoberly, righteouſly, and Godly in the world?

Conſider. 3. *That as death leaveth a man, ſo judgement will find him.* All the time which men have to prepare for Judgment is only whileſt they are in this world. There is no work in the grave whither thou goeſt. For there is a particular Judgement paſſeth upon every ſoul at death, *Heb.* 9. 27. *It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.* When once a mans ſoul is out of his body, it appears before the Judge of all, and is ſentenced, either to Life or Death for ever; which particular judgement will be publiſhed at the Laſt Day. If death find a man unprepared, ſo will Judgment. Therefore it highly concerns every man to prepare now. Miſerable Sinner, thou knoweſt not how ſoon death may come upon thee like an armed man, and dragg thy ſoul before the Judgment ſeat of GOD! It may be *this night* it will be ſo. Death ſometimes giveth no warning before it comes. Remember that Scripture, *Amos.* 4. 11. *I have overthrown ſome of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrha.* And how was that? verily by Thunder and Lightning from Heaven. And has it not been ſo amongſt us alſo? There have

been (to my obſervation) about Twenty perſons in this Land, who have at ſeveral times, and places been killed with Lightning: ſome ſuch very lately. Therefore if God fell upon *them*, and ſtruk them dead in a moment; how doeſt thou know but that it may be ſo with *thee?* If thou continueſt unprepared for Death and Judgment, thou knoweſt not but that the next Thunder-ſtorm that cometh, may prove to thy ſoul, as ſnares, and fire, and brimſtone, and an horrible Tempeſt.

Conſider. 4. *As Judgment ſhall find a man ſo it will be with him to all Eternity.* Eternity will faſten its iron Teeth upon thy ſoul then. Hence the Scripture ſpeaketh of *Eternal judgement.* Heb. 6. 2. becauſe men ſhall then be judged to an eternal eſtate either of weal or of woe. The wicked ſhall then goe away into everlaſting puniſhment, and the Righteous into Life eternal. If Judgment find a man in a good eſtate he ſhall be for ever with the Lord, he ſhall be where there is *Fulneſs of joy, and pleaſures for evermore.* But if judgement find him in his ſins, he ſhall be caſt into a dungeon out of which he ſhall *never* come, even into blackneſs of darkneſs for ever. O think of this one word, If Judgment find thee in thy ſins; after thou haſt been in

miſery

miſery as many millions of Ages as there have been dayes and minutes ſince the world began, thou art no nearer to an end of thy miſery than thou waſt the firſt hour that the Son of God paſſed on thee a ſentence of eternal death.

For Direction here,

1. *Think often on the* DAY of JUDGMENT, *and what will then become of thee.* Often let the Thought of that come into thy heart. One of the Auncients hath ſuch an Expreſſion as th is: "Wherever I go, whether I am at "home or abroad, alone or in Company, "Meethinks I am ſtill hearing the laſt Trump "ſounding, and that heaven-ſhaking voice of "the Son of God, *Ariſe you dead, and come "to JUDGMENT.* Think what will then become of thee. Muſt I then goe to Heaven or Hell? If the Lord Jeſus ſhould come to Judge the world this night, what would He ſay to mee? what Anſwer can I give to Him concerning my Time in this world, how I have ſpent it? Would the Lord ſay to me, Come thou bleſſed! or will He not ſay, Go thou curſed.

2. *Make* through-work *of it, in the matter of Repentance.* Thoughts of the Day of

of Judgment should awaken hereunto. *Act.* 17. 30, 31. *Now God commands all men every where to repent, because he hath appointed a Day in which he will judge the world.* As for impenitent sinners that live so, and dye so; the longer they live the worse it will be for them at the Day of Judgement. *Rom.* 2. 5. *But after thy hardness, and impœnitent heart, treasurest up wrath against the Day of wrath.* ---- An impenitent Sinner adds to the heap of Wrath by every sin which he does commit. Those Treasures of wrath which he has been heaping up for his miserable soul will never be spent. O therefore confess Sin: Enter into judgement with thy *self now*, if thou wouldst not have *God* enter into Judgement with thee *at that Day.* And *forsake* Sin: He that confesseth and *forsaketh* shall find mercy. Nor is it enough to forsake *some* sins *only*, but *all* known sin. If thou hast been a Swearer, confess that sin before God, and forsake it. If thou hast been a Drunkard, confess that sin and forsake it. Or if thou hast lived in Wantonness, Uuncleaness, Self-pollution (the sin which young men are commonly damn'd for) confess it to God and forsake it. Or if thou hast lived in any other sin, O turn from it unto God with thy whole heart. If thou shouldst continue to live but

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in *one* sin, at the Day of Judgement thou wilt wish that thou hadst never been born. Repent and turn from all your Transgressions, so iniqulty shall not be your ruin.

3. *Make sure of an Interest in Christ.* When the Flood came, they in the Ark were safe, but all others perished: So at the day of Judgment, they that shall be found in Christ, will be happy, but all others must into the fire that never shall be quenched. Verily an interest in Christ will be thought worth more than a Thousand worlds in that day. Make sure of it then *now*. Let no man please himself, that he is of a civil blamless Conversation; that may be, and yet thou a stranger to Christ: and then woe to thee at the day of judgment. Neither thy civility nor thy external Priviledges, nor thy performance of Religious duties can save thee without an interest in Christ. Therefore it was the Apostles greatest Care, that at the Judgment day, he *might be found in Him*. Phil. 3. 9. Let that be the greatest Care of every soul.

4. *Be fruitful in every good work.* The more good any of us do with a sincere heart, the more comfort and glory shall we have in the Day of Judgement. Now sow plentifully

plentifully in workes of Charity, and you shall reap the fruit of all *at that Day*. God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of Love, which you have shewed towards his Name, in that you have ministred to the Saints, and *do* minister. *Heb.* 6. 10. Not the least deed of Charity but shall be remembred and honourably rewarded. Whoever hath given but a cup of *cold water*, to a Disciple in the name of a Disciple, shall be rewarded for it *in that Day:* How much more shall *great* Services for GOD and for his People, be *highly* and *Eternally* recompenced! Be likewise abundant in works of Piety. O be much in prayer, especially in *Secret* prayer, and you shall be rewarded *openly* in the Day of Judgment. Alas, there's many a wretched man that will think with himself *at that day*, Oh if I had spent that time in secret prayer and Communion with God, which I *mis*spent in vain Company, in unprofitable discourses, in Taverns, in mad merry meetings; my soul might have been saved, and my Reward great in Heaven; whenas now, because I have been an unprofitable Servant, I must be cast into outer and Eternal Darkness. Oh then, Let every man practise *Now*, as he will at that DAY wish he had done. Christians may live

live ſo, as that every thing they doe ſhall be *Fruit*, and ſo add to their Crown in the Day of Judgemnt: ſo it ſhall be, if they have reſpect to God and His Glory in every thing they doe. Let us then labour to become like unto Jeſus Chriſt, who did alwaies the things that pleaſe the Father. And *if as He was, ſo are we in this world; we ſhall have boldneſs in the* DAY *of* JUDGMENT.

Fruit-

Fruitful Christians glorifie God.

JOH. XV. 8.

Herein is my Father glorifyed, that ye bear much fruit.

THese Words are part of a Sermon preached by our Lord Jesus Christ to His Disciples. He does therein compare Himself to a vine, and Believers on Him to vine branches; shewing that they can no more bring forth fruits of acceptable Obedience unto God of themselves, than a branch that is separated from the Vine can bear grapes.

In the preceding verse, our Lord exhorts His Disciples *to abide in him*, i. e. to continue constant and stedfast in the way of Faith and Obedi-

obedience. And the Motive whereby he urgeth that Exhortation is, because then God will hear their prayers. *If you abide on me, and my words in you, ask what you will; and it shall be done unto you.* which is to be understood with this Limitation, so farr as they should ask things agreable to the Will of God. The words now before us are a Confirmation of that Assertion. If Christians that bring forth much fruit glorifie God, then we may be sure that he will hear their prayers, I shall not insist on any Observation from the Contextural Consideration of the words, but from them as in themselves considered, the Doctrine is.

That fruitful Christians, especially such as are abundantly fruitful *glorifie God.*

For the clearing of the Truth before us, 3 Things may be enquired into. 1. What's implyed in this *Fruit.* 2. When Christians may be said to be *abundantly fruitful*, or to bear *much* fruit. 3. In what respect such are said to *glorifie God*

QUEST. 1. *What is implyed here in fruit?*

ANSW. 1. It does imply *a work of Grace in the soul.* All those Graces which are wrought in the souls of believers are compared to fruit in the Scripture: yea, unto *pleasant* and *savory* fruit *Cant.* 4. 13, 16. *Thy*

plants are an orchard of pomegranates with pleasant fruits. --- let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits. Faith is compared to fruit. When the *Colossians* believed, tis said, *the Gospel brought forth* fruit *amongst them. Chapt.* 1. 6. And all graces are called fruit. *Ephes.* 5. 9. *The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness.* Thus *Gal.* 5. 22, 23. *But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.* Hence godly men are compared to good trees which bear good fruit, *Mat.* 12. 33. They are called *trees of righteousness,* Isa. 61. 3.

2. *As the Habit of grace, so all the Actions thereof are fruit.* All Graces motions and operations, whether internal in the heart, or externally manifested, are Fruit. Where there is true grace, it will surely discover it self. Grace is compared to Life in the Scripture, *Eph.* 2. 9. *You hath he quickened.* Now Life discovers it self, at leastwise by breathings; So does grace in the soul alwaies discover it self by breathing after Christ, and after Holiness. Now all discoveries of a gracious frame of heart, are the *Fruit* here spoken of. Therefore

3. *Holy and gracious* Thoughts *are fruit.* All gracious workings in the minds of true believers on Christ are *Fruit.* A good *Desire*

is so. A godly desire and purpose in the heart is so. When a man is thinking and contriveing with himself how he may promote the Glory of God and Good of men, those thoughts are fruit. As *David* when he was thinking to build an House for the Name of God, that godly intention was *pleasant fruit*. And the Apostle *Paul* had many gracious purposes and designs working in his heart, which *Timothy* who was intimate with him knew much of. 2. *Tim.* 3. 10. *Thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose,* ---- God seeth, and delights to see holy purposes, and sincere real intentions in the hearts of His servants to glorifie His Name.

3. *Gracious* words *are fruit.* It is said of Christ, that *gracious words proceeded out of his mouth.* When it is so with Christians then they are fruitful. A good tree is known by such fruit as that, *Mat.* 12. 33, 35. *Make the tree good and his fruit good.* --- *Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart* bringeth forth *good things.* Gracious Speeches which may tend to the Edification of the soul of the Speaker or of the hearers, are compared to fruit. *Pro.* 10 31. *The mouth of the just brings forth wisdom.* and *Chapt.* 11. 30. *The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he that winneth*

souls is wise. and *Chapt.* 15. 4. *A wholesome tongue is a tree of life.* Hence also we read of the *fruit of the mouth. Prov.* 12. 14. In a word, that man is a fruitful Christian, who is duly observant of that excellent Rule laid down by the Apostle, *Eph.* 4. 29. *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouthes, but that which is good, to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.*

5. *Good* Works *are fruit.* Col. 1. 10. *Being fruitful in every good work.* Works of Piety if done from a right principle, and for a right end are fruit Praying, Hearing the Word preached, Setting dayes apart for Prayer or Praise, are holy fruit. And when men do by their Estates encourage the work of the Gospel, or promote public and pious designs, they are truly said to bear fruit. Hence the Apostle saith to the *Philipians* that he *desired fruit which might abound to their account,* Cap. 4. 17. Works of Charity are fruit, *Almsdeeds* are so. Especially when men do with their Estates relieve and refresh the needy Servants of God, thats fruit and very pleasant fruit before the Lord. *Heb.* 13. 16. *But to do good, & to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.* When the Churches among the *Gentiles* relieved the poor

Saints

Saints at *Jerusalem*, the Lord was *delighted* with that fruit. Some who look upon the *Song of Solomon* as a prophesy, suppose *works of Charity* to be intended by those Expressions, *Cant.* 4. 10. *How fair is thy love, my sister my spouse! How much better is thy love than wine, and the smell of thine ointment than all spices!* However, it was pleasant *fruit*. When Christians carry it one towards another as the rule of Charity requireth, they are said to *bring forth fruit*, And this is in a special manner intended in my Text: When Christ saith to his Disciples, *bring forth much fruit*, His meaning is, *Love one another much.*

We come then to the 2*nd*. Enquiry, *viz.*

When may Christians be said to bear much fruit? And the Answer to that is clear from what has been said in shewing what the *fruit* here spoken of is. In two words,

1. *They that have much* grace, *bear much fruit*. There is a marvellous difference among true Christians as to *degrees of* grace. Tho every Believer hath every grace in some degree, yet it may be he has no grace in that eminent degree which some others have. Hence some Christians are compared unto *Babes*, others unto *grown men*. 1. Cor. 3. 1. Some to *children*, others, to *fathers* 1. Joh. 2. 13.

As there is a Difference in ſpiritual gifts, that one Saint does very much excel another; ſo there is in grace. The grace of one does exceed the grace of another, as much as the ſtrength of a *man* is above the ſtrength of a *child.* Now inaſmuch as grace is *fruit* (as was ſhewed) the more grace any man hath, the more *fruit* does he bear.

2. *They that do moſt good are moſt fruitful.* Grace will prompt a man to be doing good. Hence the more grace he hath. the more *good* will he deſire and endeavour to do. The Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is in this Chapter compared to a vine, was the moſt fruitful vine that ever was. Like *Jotham's* Vine, and like his Fig-tree, which had *good fruit*, whereby *the heart of God and man was cheered.* Judg. 9. 11, 13. He was alwayes doing good, *Joh.* 8. 24. *I doe alwayes the things that pleaſe Him,* Now nothing pleaſeth God but that which is good. When a Chriſtian is in ſome meaſure like *Chriſt*, that all that have occaſion to converſe with him, *are*, or *may be* the better for him, then he is one that bears much fruit. As (I remember) *Junius* ſaies concerning that Learned and holy *Urſin*, that *He never went to converſe with him about any matter, but he was the better for it, he heard ſomething from him that was for his edification.* This is to *bear much fruit.*

When

When a Christian shall be very instrumental for the good of others, he is abundantly fruitful. It was said of *Jehojada*, that he had *done good in Israel both towards God, and towards his house.* 2. Chron. 24. 16. So they that have done much good in their Generation, have brought forth much fruit. And the truth is, A man cannot do greater good in this world, than to promote the good of the souls of men: Therefore to be *abundantly* instrumental in the Conversion, and Edification of souls, is to be *very fruitful.* That some take to be especially intended in the words of my Text, *If you bear much fruit*, h. e. by private and public endeavours for the good of immortal souls, then God will be glorifyed. Hence in the 16*th* verse of this Chapter Christ sayes, *I have ordained you, that you should goe and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain.* The fruit which the Apostles brought forth by the Sermons which they preach'd, and by their Writings, remains to this day unto the Edification of the Church of God.

We proceed then to the 3*d*. Enquiry. vizt.

In what respects, or upon what accounts fruitful Christians are said to glorify God?

Answ. 1. *Because fruitful Christians do make it appear that God is a glorious One.* Men are

not said to glorifie God, as though they made him more glorious than he was before, for that is impossible: Their goodness does not extend to Him: God's Essential Glory is infinite, and therefore its impossible that there should be any addition thereunto: But when Christians bear much fruit, they delare His glory before the world. They make it manifest that the LORD is a Glorious GOD. 1. *Pet.* 2. 9. *That you should shew forth the* praises *of Him,* or the *vertues of Him.* The *Virtue,* the Power of God is shewed forth, when his people are made fruitful. When grace is wrought in the soul, the mighty *Power* of God (which is his *Glory*) is exerted and manifested. And so it is when they *act* and *exercise* grace. *e. g.* When a Christian does exercise much patience under affliction, the power of God is thereby magnified and manifested to the praise and glory of his Name. *Col.* 1. 11. *Strengthned with all might according to his* glorious *power, unto all patience and long-suffering with Joyfulness.* Its wonderful to see with what patience some Christians endure their Temptations and Afflictions: but it is from the glorious power of God strengthning their hearts and spirits. Again, That such poor, weak creatures as the children of men are, should be enabled by Faith to encounter

encounter with and to overcome sin, Satan, & the world! this shewes the glorious power of God. Besides all this, The more a Christian does abound in fruits of Charity and Holiness, the more like he is unto God. The Lord is good, and *He does good:* Therefore they that doe much good are like to Him. *do good* (said Christ) *that you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.* Mat. 5. 44, 45. that is to say, that you may be like to Him, as children resemble their Father: That the world may *in* you and *by* you see something what God is, what glorious perfections are in his Nature.

2. *When Christians bear fruit as they ought to do, they cause the Name of God to be blessed and praised.* That may be meant by these words, *Herein is my father glorified.* h. e. this will tend to his praise. Isai. 60. 21. *Thy people shall be all righteous, ---- the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.* h. e. by meanes of whom I shall have praise and glory. As for fruitful Christians, there are many that do bless them, and bless God *for* them. All the Churches in *Judea*, when they understood what a fruitful Christian *Paul* was, they blessed God for him, *Gal.* 1. 23, 24. *They heard that he which persecuted us in times past, now preached the faith which once he destroyed:*

and

& they glorified God in me. By meanes *of* him & *for* him they praised God. *Titus* also, was a fruitful Christian, and the holy Apostle blessed God for him, 2. *Cor.* 8. 16. *But thanks be to God who put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you.* And he exhorts the *Corinthians* unto *fruitfulness* from this consideration, that then many would bless God for them. If you(saith he)be serviceable unto others, they will glorify God, and there will be many Thanksgivings to God, 2. *Cor.* 9. 12. 13. Yea, The Fruitfulness of Christians doth sometimes cause the world to think and speak well of the Name of God ; that the world will say, surely God is a good God, whose servants are thus good, & that God is a holy God whose servants are thus holy. Hence Christ said to his Disciples, *Mat.* 5. 16. *Let your light so shine before men that the may see your good works, and glorifie your Father which is in heaven.*

I proceed to make some *Aplication* of this Doctrine. 1*st.* By way of *Instruction* or *Information.*

Instr. 1. *Hence fruitful Christians are dear to God.* His *Glory* is dear to him, and therefore they that are active instruments in glorifying his Name, must needs be dear to him. *They abide in his love,* as Christ here speaks. and thence it is that their prayers can do much

with

with God. Whatever they ask, he is ready to grant them. They no sooner *speak*, but *speed*. It is because God has a special delight in the persons of such as love to glorifie his Name, and so in their *prayers*. The Lord Jesus Christ said, *Therefore doth my Father love mee, because I laid down my life. Joh.* 10. 17. So God does therefore love some Christians above others, because they are more fruitful, and He has more glory to his Name by them than he has by others. Not that God's love of *Good-will* does at all depend upon the works or goodness of men: Nor was He at all moved from the fore-sight of any fruit or gracious Qualifications in them, to set his heart upon them; but because He has loved them, therefore they become fruitful. Only His *love of delight* in them, is more or less according to the measure of the fruit which they bring forth to his praise and glory. Men if they have Vines or Trees in their Orchards which are very fruitful, they take a peculiar delight in them. So does the Lord doe. *Job* was the most fruitful Saint in the world in his time; and how was the Lord taken with him! *Cap.* 1. 8. *Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth!* The Lord seems to *glory* in having such a good and useful servant as *Job* was. *Moses* was a most

fruitful

fruitful man, and brought more glory to God than any one in the world in the Age wherein he lived, and God delighted in him: yea, he was so dear to God as that He could not bear to have any one speak an ill word of him, *Numb.* 12. 7, 8, 9. But especially when *Young* men are abundantly fruitful, the Lord does *exceedingly* delight in them: As we see in that instance of the Apostle *John*, of whom Ecclesiastical Story reports that he was the youngest of all the Disciples, but *one and twenty* years old when he began his public Ministry and Apostleship: and he was *the disciple whom Jesus loved.* To see a man so *young* so set upon glorifying God, was very pleasing. If a man has in his Orchard a *young* tree loaden with fruit, he takes delight in looking upon it: A young man that is alwayes doing good, the Great God never looketh upon him but with delight.

Instr. 2. *Hence it is a very great mercy to have an oportunity of being fruitful.* there is no creature capable of a greater happiness than to be an active instrument of glorifying God. Therefore opportunities that way are singular mercies. I remember an eminent Divine that was wont to say, *My* opportunities *are my greatest riches.* To be improved in publique Service for God amongst his people is a wonderful

wonderful favour; and it is a very evil thing to decline all such advantages for Service to the Name of God. Not that a man is alwaies bound to make use of every opportunity: For God may be so gracious to him, as to put many great opportunities into his hands, more than he can make use of. And then he must consider with himself, *In which of these shall I be like to bring the greatest and most lasting glory to the Name of God?* and let him be sure to doe that. But when men shall out of passion or discontent, or for any carnal ends, decline all publique Service for Christ and for his People, it is certain that their hearts are not set upon glorifying God as they ought to be, and that they don't act grace but corruption. Moreover, It is a great happiness to be call'd to Suffer for God's Name and Truth. *Phil.* 1. 29. *Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but to* suffer *for his sake.* Not that Sufferings are in *themselves* desireable, only as then and thereby we have an opportunity to glorifie God. In that respect if you be reproached for the Name of Christ, happy are you, for on your part He is glorified. Its then a great mercy to have an opportunity to be either *doing* or *suffering* for Christ.

Instr. 3. *Hence they that call themselves Christians, and yet bear litle or no* fruit, *are a dishonour to the blessed Name of God.* And yet alas how many such are their! Christians who are barren fig-trees, or barren Vines in the Lord's garden, that have the leaves of Profession growing on them, but not the Fruits of practise: That when the Lord cometh to them looking for fruit, He findeth *nothing but leaves*, a meer formal profession, of whom He may justly say *cut them down, why cumber they the ground?* There are others that have *blossoms* only. Convictions of sin and Duty, and beginnings of Reformation are Blossoms. Many have had *these* who never brought forth the fruit of true Repentance, and Faith, and Holinass. Oh how have they dishonoured God, and what a deadly case are their souls in! Naturalists observe that if a tree blossome, and yet does not bear fruit, it is many times a sign that it will dye; So when persons have Convictions, and Troubles of Conscience, and begin to set upon the practice of holy Duties, but notwithstanding these illuminations are not throughly *converted*, it is a sad sign that their souls shall dye forever. The Apostle speaks of *trees whose fruit withered, without fruit, twice dead*, Jude. 12. They that have

have had convictons, and some external Reformations; and after that return to their former evil waies again, are *twice dead.* And don't we see some *withered professors* of Religion! The time was when they made a fair show, a glorious profession, but all is wither'd away into sapless Formality. Such may well fear that they were never truly implanted into Christ, and therefore are they cast forth and withered.

And there are many true Believers, which tho' they bear fruit, yet but little fruit comparatively to what they should and might do. What barren hearts have they! Not so many holy thoughts therein as ought to be! what barren lips, that are not filled up with profitable discourse! This, verily is the great sin of many professors: They spend whole hours in Company with one another, and yet not *one* edifying word all that time. Nay, it may be their Comunications such, as they would be ashamed to say what they had bin speaking, if the holy Lord Jesus should suddenly break in upon them and demand what their discourses were about. As he did when his Disciples were in a house at *Capernaum*, the Lord asked them, *what was it that you disputed among your selvs by the way? And they held their peace, for they had been disputing who should be the greatest.* Mark. 9. 33. 34. They were asham'd

to

to tell what discourses had pass'd amongst them. Is there not a great deal of unfruitful Discourse amongst Christians when they meet occasionally? On a time there happ'ned to be a number of Christians together, and their Discourse being frothy and fruitless, a young man in the room who was of a more serious and holy temper than the rest, took his pen and ink and for a while in Short-hand wrote down what every man said, and having so done, he pray'd them to tell him what every man of them had spoken since they came together; but if you cannot (said he) I'le read to you what has passed in discourse: You (said he) spoke these words, and you (said he to another) utterd these words, and you (said he) to a third, had these Expressions: and when they heard over again what foolish talk had been among them, they were all ashamed. Certainly many good people are not so mindful as they should be, that of *every idle word* they must give an account to Christ in another world. Such dishonour God by their unfruitfulness.

And are men duly careful to glorify God with their outward *Estates*? Do they bear much fruit in *that* respect? Some that have considerable estates, how little good do they do with them! They can lavish out of the

bag

bag to serve an Idol, to gratifie a Lust: would they with a sincere heart do as much for God who has given them all they enjoy, what blessed Acknowledgments should they have from *Jesus Christ* at the great Day! But if they be put upon a good Work, how little have they to spare! Such Christians dishonour God.

USE. 2. EXHORTATION.

Let us Endeavour to be abundantly Fruitful.

The Motive in the Text, is enough if there were nothing else to be mentioned. Where is there a man that has the heart of a Christian in him, but above all things in this world, he desireth to glorifie God? *So shall you be my Disciples*, saith Christ. It is the spirit of a true Disciple of Christ to desire that God may be glorifyed, and therefore to endeavour to be fruitful. But moreover,

Consider, 1. *We may bear much fruit, if the fault be not our own.* Some indeed are advantaged thereunto above others, *namely*, They that are in a publick capacity (as many before the Lord in this Assembly are.) A *Magistrate* is put into a capacity of bearing fruit in such a Degree, as that the whole *Countrey* shall fare the better for him: By being Zealous for God, in the Execution of Justice, and the

Suppreſſion of Vice. He may *ſtand in the Gap*, and ſave a whole People from Ruin. When Sin is Duly puniſhed, all fare the better for that fruit of Righteouſneſs. And They that miniſter in the Houſe of God, have an opportunity put into their hands of being abundantly fruitful. He that converts a ſinner, and ſo ſaveth a ſoul from death, beareth much fruit. He that builds up many in Faith and Holineſs, beareth much fruit. That Miniſter who ſhall be an Example of the Believers in Word, in Converſation, in Charity, in Spirit, in Faith, in Purity, beareth much fruit, and many ſouls will feed thereon, and bleſs God to eternity that ever they knew ſuch a one. But *Private* Chriſtians alſo, may bear much fruit: They may ſet ſuch an Example as many others may be the better for: And by their prayers they may doe much good. A prayerful Chriſtian is a fruitful Chriſtian. I will ſuppoſe a poor man, or a poor woman that is little taken notice of by the world, but is much in prayer, and is upon all occaſions getting others together and inciting them to Prayer, and provoking them to love and to good works; I ſay the whole Town and Land fareth the better for that poor man, for that poor godly woman

Conſider, 2. *The Lord expects much fruit from us.*

As

As He speaks in the 5th of *Isaiah*, He planted His Vineyard *in a very fruitful hill*, and then looked that it should bring forth Grapes. Truly so hath God dealt with *us*, He hath planted us in a very fruitful soyl. What Liberties do we enjoy! Mention, if you can, a People in the world, so priviledg'd as we are! So that the Lords Expectations are great concerning us, and woe unto us if we utterly fail him! What Sermons do men hear! what Sacraments do they enjoy! What Sabbaths, what Lectures! Yea, and what Providences have passed over us! What Afflictions! What Reproaches! What Sicknesses! God's end in bringing such Afflictions upon His servants, is that so they might bear yet more fruit. *Joh.* 15. 2. *Every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it that it may bring forth* more *fruit*. And how does God purge fruitful branches, but by bringing afflictions upon them, and sanctifying those afflictions to their purgation, that they bring forth yet *more* fruit to His glory? And what Mercies, what Deliverances have we had, publique and personal! Some of us have been pulled out of the Jaws of Death. Perhaps we have been in eminent Dangers at Sea; and what does God expect now but more fruit? Or Sickness has brought us to the gates of the Grave, only

God hath said, Return again into the world, and let me see you bear much fruit that I may be glorified.

Quest. *But what shall be done that it may be so?*

Answ. 1. *We must in the first place make sure of our Union with Christ.* Remember that without Him we can do nothing, as in this context the Lord hath declared, *Joh.* 15. 4, 5. *As the branch cannot bear fruit of it self, except it abide in the vine; no more can you, except you abide in me. I am the vine, and ye are the branches, he that abideth in Me, and I in him; the same bringeth forth much fruit.* And the Apostle saith *We must be married to Him that was raised from the dead, that so we might bring forth fruit unto God. Rom.* 7. 4. Tho' a man should do never so many good workes in the account of men, tho he should pray never so often, tho he should give his Estate to the poor, if he is not in *Christ*, all that he does is no *fruit unto God.* It was a truly christian Reply of that Pious Minister, who when some told him of the good Works he had done in the time of his health, and that therefore in case he should dye, his Reward in Heaven must needs be very great; *These* (said he) *are good works, if they be sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ.* If a man be in Christ, then his good

good Works will be fruit, otherwise not. Hence the Apostle speakes of being *filled with the fruits of righteousnes, which are by* Jesus Christ *unto the praise and glory of God.* Phil. 1. 11. No man did ever bring forth fruits of Righteousnes, but it was by Christ Jesus, and therefore no man will be *full* of those fruits, Except he be in Christ.

2. *Let us labour for a Publick spirit, and for* much *of such a spirit.* The reason why men bring no more fruit to the Glory of God, is because they have so much of a private, selfish spirit prevailing in them. All seek their own, not the things which are Christ's. The Prophet complain'd *Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit to* himself. *Hos.* 10. 1. The man that's all for himself, will certainly be an *empty, fruitless* vine: the most fruitful Saints have alwaies been eminent for a publick Spirit. *David* was one that did bear much fruit, and he was of a publick spirit. *He served his generation.* He had great Advantages to have served *himself*, but his heart was set upon serving the generation wherein he lived. And *Solomon* brought forth much fruit: He also was of a *publick spirit*; wherefore he built God's House before his own, and made quicker dispatch with it. *Nehemiah*, and *Mordecai* were fruitful Servants of God, and they

were men that denied themselves much out of respect to the publick interest. Amongst the Apostles there was none did bear so much fruit as *Paul:* (*In labours more abundant than they all*) And he was of a very publie spirit. He made it the chief design of his life to do good to many. 1. *Cor.* 10. 33. *Not seeking my* own *profit, but the profit of* many *that they might be saved.*

3. *Let us be alwaies bearing fruit.* That's the way to bear *much* fruit. He that bears fruit every day, will at last bear much fruit. A Christian should not let one day pass, without some good. And therefore it is good for a man, as duly as the day passeth over his head, when night cometh, to call himself to an account before he goeth to sleep, and to ask, *Where have I been this day? How have I spent my* time *this day? Have I gained any spiritual good to my self, or done any good to* others *this day?* Thus doe, and if upon Examination, you find that your time has been spent unprofitably, Oh fall down and mourn in the presence of God, and say, *Alas O Lord, I have lost a day!* I have read of a great *Moraliſt*, that would doe not much less than this comes to. How much more should a *Christian* be careful to spend his time well every day! And he should endeavour to doe good where-

over

wherever he cometh. He may doe good in whatever place he shall be. If he be in Company with others, he may doe good with his Tongue. Some have said concerning Dr. *Preston*, that he was the most fruitful Christian in the world in that respect. He would upon all occasions set on foot Edifying Discourse, either something that should tend to promote Knowledge, or should be helpful as to the practical part of Christianity. Or, If a man be alone; he may do good with his head and heart, he may be contriving for God's glory. He may be often thinking with himself, *What shall I doe for God?* Is there nothing that I may yet doe for God and His people, more than I have hitherto done? Yea, a Christian should endeavour so to walk, as that all he does may be *fruit unto God*. Therefore holy Thoughts of GOD should be still running in his mind. I could name a man to you, that could say, *For the space of these* ten years, *excepting when I have been asleep, Thoughts of God have not been out of my heart a quarter of an hour together.* We should have thoughts of God, in our Eating, Drinking, Buying, Selling, and in *all* that we doe. And explicit aymings at His Glory, should be in our hearts and thoughts very frequently every day. So will

all that we do become fruit, and then we shall bear *much* fruit.

4. *Let us set before us the most holy and fruitful Examples for our Imitation. Take, my brethren, the prophets for an Example* Jam. 5. 10. Such as we read of in the Scripture who were Eminent for God, we should consider their Example, and endeavour to become like them. Or such of the Saints as we our selves have known or heard of. And hence the reading of the Lives of holy & eminent servants of Christ is certainly a good, and profitable thing: It may (by the blessing of God) be a meanes to cause us to become like to them in Holiness and Fruitfulness. But above all let us set the Example of *JESUS CHRIST* before us, and learn of Him. The best of men have had their failings, and so are not a perfect Copy to write after: But Christ did all things well, and never did amiss in *any* thing. *He went up and down doing good. Act.* 10. 3. He came no where, but He did some good, brought forth some fruit there. We should remember that example. And if a Christian be exercised with any Temptation, suppose him to be persecuted, made the reproach of the world, slandered, and his life sought after! let him think with himself,

How

How did Christ carry it under such Temptations? Let me demean my self as near as I can as He did. Or if he be put upon any Service, Let him consider, If Christ had been called to such a Service, how would *He* have manag'd that work to the glory of the Father? And as He was, so let me be in this world. Every one of us here, calls himself a Christian: He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself also *so* to walk, even as He walked. So shall we bear much fruit, and glorifie God.

It

It is good for every man to draw near to God.

PSAL. LXXIII. 28.

But it is good for me to draw near to God. ---

THere are two great Truths asserted in this *Psalm*, from both of which these words are an Inference.

1. That God is good to his Servants, notwithstanding all the evils which may befal them in the world. *ver.* 1. *Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.* Tho' such may meet with many afflictions, yet God is good, yea and good to *them* in all. He intends them good and not hurt by the Temptations which they may at any time be exercised with. Now if God be so good to His People

People, it muſt needs be good, and the beſt Courſe they can take to draw near to Him.

2. Another thing aſſerted in this Pſalm, is, That tho' wicked men who are ſtrangers to God may be in preſent proſperity, yet it will not be long before they utterly periſh, *ver.* 27. *For lo, they that are far from thee ſhall periſh, thou haſt deſtroyed all them that go a whoring from thee.* And therefore he concludes that it is good to draw near to God. If they periſh that are *far off*, the Beſt and ſafeſt courſe is to get and keep *near*. Inaſmuch as it cannot be *ill* with thoſe that are *with* Him, nor *well* with thoſe that are *without* Him, its a Rational and a neceſſary concluſion that *it is good to draw near*. And whereas the *Pſalmiſt* ſayes, It is good for *me*, Two Things are implyed,

1 That for his own part he was reſolv'd to practiſe according to what he here makes Profeſſion of. 2. That tho the generality of men did not draw near to God, yet it would be good for them ſo to doe. He does not intend that it would be good for *himſelf only*, but it is equally true of all other men, and ſo they ſhould find it, would they be perſwaded to make the Experiment.

The Doctrine then is,

That it is good for every *man to draw near to God.*

Draw-

Drawing nigh to God is not not only in it ſelf a good thing, but its good for them that ſincerely do ſo.

Here *two* Things are to be enquired into. 1. When a man may be ſaid to draw near to God. 2. How it does appear that it is good ſo to do.

QUEST. 1. *When may a man be ſaid to draw near to God?*

ANSW. 1. *When he is brought out of a ſtate of Nature into a ſtate of Grace, he is brought near to God.* There is a drawing nigh to God in reſpect of a man's ſtate, as well as an actual drawing nigh to Him. A Sinner is in a ſtate of Separation from God. Therefore men in a ſtate of ſin are deſcribed to be *a farr off*. *Eph.* 2. 13. It is ſaid of the Prodigal, that *he was a great way off*. Luk. 15. 20. Sin has made a vaſt and woful diſtance between the bleſſed God and the ſouls of men: it hath ſet their ſouls at an infinite diſtance from Him: But by true Converſion they are brought near to Him again. The Prodigal Son, when he came to himſelf, ſaid, *I will ariſe and* go *to my father.* A repenting ſinner *goeth* to God. Hence Repentance is ſometimes call'd a *drawing nigh to Him.* Jam. 4. 8. *Draw nigh to God, & he will draw nigh to you, cleanſe your hands you ſinners & puriſy your hearts you double minded.* The Apoſtle having

ſhewed

ſhew'd the evil of ſeveral vices, he preſcribes one *Catholic* Remedy for them all, viz. *Repentance*, which he calleth a Drawing nigh to God, a Cleanſing the hands, a Purifying the heart, an Humbling of themſelves &c. There muſt be Union and Reconciliation before there can be *Communion*. *Amos.* 3. 33. *Can two walk together except they be agreed?* You and I (ſays God) are not agreed, and therefore how can we hold Communion? A ſinner is an enemy to God, but a *Converted* ſinner is become reconciled to Him. *He is made* nigh *by the blood of Chriſt, and ſo hath* acceſs *unto the Father.* Eph. 2. 13. 18. Men by being *made nigh*, they *draw nigh*: being by Faith and Repentance *brought* near to God through Jeſus Chriſt, they ever after *draw* near to Him. This layeth the Foundation of all that Communion which we have with God. It neceſſarily implyes Union and Reconciliation with Him.

2. *When men enter into Covenant with God, they draw near to Him.* Such are ſaid to *joyn themſelves to the Lord.* Jer. 50. 5. *Iſai.* 56. 6. As they that are wholly ſtrangers to the Covenant are ſaid to be *without God* Eph. 2. 12. & to be *far off* Act. 2. 39. So the Lord's Covenant people are ſaid to be *near* to Him *Iſa.* 57, 19. *I create the fruit of the lips, peace, peace, to him that is*

far

far off & to him that is near. That is, to the *Gentile* and to the *Jew.* *Paul* hath reſpect to that Scripture in *Iſaiah*, when he ſays, *Chriſt came & preached peace to you that were a far off*; h. e. to the *Gentiles* who were ſtrangers to the covenant: *and to them that were nigh*, i. e. to the *Jews*, who were nigh to God in reſpect of the Covenant. *Eph.* 2. 17. On this account the Children of *Iſrael* were nearer to God than any other Nation in the world. *Pſal.* 148. 14. *The Children of Iſrael, a people* near *unto Him.* There is an *external Covenanting* with God, ſuch may be *really* farr from God, yet they are as to their viſible ſtate near to Him. *Jer.* 12. 2. *Thou art near in their* mouth, *and far from their* reins. And there is an *Internal* Covenanting with God, when men give not their names only, but their *hearts* to God, devoting themſelves entirely to His fear, and renouncing all other Lords and Lovers in Compariſon of *Him*, and for *His* ſake. They draw near to God, who can truly ſay as His people do *Iſai.* 26. 13. *O Lord our God, other lords have had dominion over us, but by Thee only will we make mention of Thy Name.*

3. *When men* worſhip *God, they draw nigh to Him.* Thus the *Chaldee Interpreter* paraphraſeth upon the Text, *It is good for me to come to the worſhip of God.* There is a *ſpecial* Preſence

Preſence of God where He is worſhiped; eſpecially in His *Publique* Worſhip. *Exod.* 20. 24. *In all places where I record my Name, I will come unto thee.* When men come to worſhip, they are ſaid to gather round about the holy God whom they ſerve, *Pſal.* 89. 7. *God is greatly to be feared in the Aſſembly of His ſaints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are* about *Him.* Hence the Prieſts of old were ſaid in a peculiar manner to draw nigh unto God, becauſe they were conſtantly employed in holy Miniſtrations, *Exod.* 19. 22. --- *the Prieſts which come near to the Lord.* Their whole employment was a divine Service. *Ezek* 44. 15. *They ſhall come near to me, to miniſter to me, and they ſhall ſtand before me, to offer unto me the fat and the blood, ſaith the Lord God.* When men come to hear the Word, they draw near to God: They approach into His ſpecial preſence, and muſt therefore attend with all humility and reverence, becauſe in coming to hear, they preſent themſelves into the preſence of the *Infinite* MAJESTY. *Eccleſ.* 5. 1. *Keep thy foot*, i. e. Be reverent in thy behaviour; For among the Eaſtern Nations, Uncovering the foot did ſignifie the ſame that uncovering the head does with us, being a Teſtification of humble and reverend

reſpect

reſpect, *when thou goeſt to the Houſe of God, and be more ready to hear than to offer the ſacrifice of fools.* Which words ſhew that in hearing the Word, men have to doe with God. They come into his *Houſe*, & approach into his *ſolemn Preſence.* In *Prayer* alſo, men draw *near* to God. *Heb.* 10. 22. *Having ſuch an high prieſt, let us draw near with a true heart in full aſſurance of faith.* The Apoſtle's meaning is, let us in ſincerity of heart pray unto God, being fully aſſured that He will accept of us for the ſake of Jeſus Chriſt. Prayer is call'd a *viſiting of God*, Iſai. 26. 16. A knocking at His door, *Mat.* 7. 7. *Knock and it ſhall be opened to you.* By Prayer men knock at heavens door. Prayer is nothing elſe but the ſouls Going up to God. Pſal. 25. 1. *Unto thee O Lord do I lift up my ſoul.* When the Pſalmiſt ſayes it is good for me to draw near to God, Part of his meaning is, it is good for me, that I ſhould hear the Word of God, and that I ſhould pray to Him.

4. *When men joyn themſelves to the Church and and People of God, they draw neer to him.* For there is a ſpecial preſence of God in His Church. The name of that place is *Jehovah Shammah*, h. e. *The Lord is there.* Ezek. 48. *ult.* His Church is his Houſe. That particular Church in *Epheſus*, was *the houſe of the living God.* 1. Tim. 3. 15. Every Church

is a Sanctury. Therefore God dwells therein *Psal.* 26. 8. *I have loved the habitation of thine house, and the place where thine* honour *dwells.* His *Honour* i. e. GOD Himself, (Who is expressed by the Name of *Honour*, as also by the Name of *Majesty* & of *glory*) dwells in His Sanctuary. He is to be seen there. *Psal.* 27. 4. *One thing have I desired,* (h. e. one thing in a more peculiar manner) *that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the dayes of my life, to behold the Beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in His holy Temple.* So that the Lord appears in His Beauty to those that are in His House, and there make enquiry after him. *Psal.* 63. 2. *To see thy Power and glory, as I have seen Thee in the Sanctuary.* Every true and pure Church is Sanctuary, where much of God is to be seen. He walks in the midst of his Golden Candlesticks. *Rev.* 2. 1. Those holy Ordinances whereof the Church is the proper subject, have much of God in them. Hence the Spouse speakes as in *Cant.* 1. 4. *The King hath brought me into his chambers,* and Chapt 2. ver. 4. *He brought me to the banqueting house.* The holy Ordinances of God, are Christ's Chambers, and his Church is the Banquetting house where He does feed and feast the souls of his people. It is in a very peculiar manner true with respect to

that

that Ordinance of the Lords Supper, which is not regularly Administred but in a Church Assembly, Believers draw near to God therein, as near as is possible for men to do in this world. There the Lord is wont to shew himself after a gracious manner to the souls of his people, who do by Faith attend upon Him. When *Joseph* and his Brethren did eat & drink together in the same room, there was an intimacy of Communion between them, so there is between Christ and Believers in that Ordinance of the Lord's Supper. Christ Himself is in the same Room, yea, and at the same Table with them.

5. *When men* exercise Grace, *then they draw near to God.* This is the best drawing nigh to God; that which is most acceptable to *Him*, and most profitable to the souls of men. And it is peculiar unto true Believers. There is a drawing near to God *externally*; so *Hypocrites* may draw nigh unto him. *Mat.* 15. 8. *Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah proaheſy of you, saying, This people draweth near to me with their* mouth, *and honoureth me with their* lips, *but their* heart *is far from me.* There is moreover an *Internal* drawing near to God: which Hypocrites are strangers unto. They may have Communion with *duties*, but they have not real Communion with *God* in Duties. This

internal Communion with God, consists in those inward actings of Grace whereby the soul is carried out towards God. As now, When the Affections which are as it were the the *feet* and *wings* of the soul, are earnestly carried out after God. The soul that does indeed pant and breathe after Communion with God draweth near to him. *Psal.* 42. 1, 2. *As the hart panteth after the water brooks; so panteth my soul after Thee O God: My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God, when shall I come and appear before God?* The soul which loveth and longeth to be where God is, hath Communion with him. *Isai.* 26. 9. *With my soul have I desired thee in the night, yea with my spirit within me will I seek Thee early.* When there are actings of love and delight in God, the soul draweh near to Him Love is a marvellous uniting affection. 1. *Joh.* 4. 16. *He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him,* Therefore the more a Christian does exercise that grace of Love to God, the nearer will his Communion with God be. So when a man does renew and exercise Repentance towards God, he draweth near to him. Wherefore the *Psalmist* says, *The Lord nigh unto them is that are of a broken heart. Psal.* 34. 18. He that confesseth sin, with a broken heart for it, draweth nigh unto God, and God draweth nigh to

Him

Him. The like is to be ſaid concerning the Actings of Faith: As the wotkings of Unbelief in the heart, are a ſoul-departure from *God*, Zeph. 3. 2. *She truſted not in the Lord, ſhe drew not near to her God.* So when the ſoul does indeed act faith upon Jeſus Chriſt, when there is not only prayer but *Faith* in prayer, then there is a drawing near to God.

6. *This drawing near to God, implies conſtancy in the way of Obedience.* The *Hebrew* word [*Kirbath*] which is here uſed, ſignifyeth to *cleave unto.* Some read the words, *Bonum eſt mihi* adhærere *Deo*, It is good for me that I ſhould *cleave unto* God. This is call'd *a walking with God & an abiding with God* 1. Cor. 7. 24. They that are conſtantly careful to walk ſo, as not to diſpleaſe the Lord, He delights to meet them, and to hold Communion with them. *Iſai.* 64. 5. *Thou* meeteſt *him that rejoiceth and worketh righteouſneſs.* And therefore the Lord Jeſus Chriſt hath ſaid, *If a man love Me, he will keep my words, and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him. Joh.* 14. 23. But thus for the 1*ſt*. Enquiry.

We proceed 2*ly* to enquire, *How it does appear that it is good for every man to draw near to God?*

ANSW. Several things may be mentioned which are clear Demonſtrations of the Truth and Doctrine now before us.

1. *To be ſeparated from God, is the greateſt* Evil. Therefore to draw near to Him, muſt needs be *good*. Its a diſmal thing to be baniſhed out of the Lord's preſence. *Hoſ.* 9. 12. *Wo unto them when I depart from them!* A greater wo than that there never was, nor can there be. When the Sun withdraweth nothing but darkneſs follows. A great Part of the Puniſhment of the of the Apoſtate Angels, is in their being Eternally ſeparated from the face and favour of that God which made them. Guilty, trembling *Cain* thought his puniſhment intolerable in this reſpect. *Gen.* 4. 13. *Cain ſaid unto the Lord, my puniſhment is greater than I can bear.* Why, how ſo? *ver.* 14. *From Thy face I ſhall be hid.* Verily, The damned in hell have not a greater puniſhment than that inflicted on them. *Mat.* 25. 41. Depart *from me ye curſed into everlaſting fire.* The *firſt* and *ſadeſt* word in that dreadful Sentence is, *DEPART from ME.* There is more of Terrour in *that*, than in all the Fire and Brimſtone of hell. In God's Favour is Life, and His loving kindneſs is *better* than life: Therefore to be caſt out of his Favour is *worſe* than any Death. And if ſo, To have Communion with *Him* is the greateſt happineſs. For,

2. *God is the Chief Good.* There have been

been great disputes among those whom the world has accounted wise men, about the *Chief Good*. *Austin* observes that there were no less than *two hundred eighty eight* Opinions amongst the old Philosophers about the *Chief Good*. But *we* are are sure, that there is no Chief Good but God only. The young Noble-man in the Gospel did not know that Christ was God, and therefore when he called Him good, the Lord said to him, *Why callest thou me good? there is none good but One, that is God*. Matth. 19. 17. There is no Chief Good but God. He is *infinitly* good: He is an *all-sufficient* good. His Name is *El-Shaddai:* h. e. the God who is *sufficiency*. He has enough in Himself to satisfie his own infinite Self: And therefore more than enough to satisfie all creatures, whatever the wants, whatever the desires of of the souls of men may be; there's enough in God to satisfie them all. God is a *Universal Good*; so that it is impossible for a man to be miserable, if he hath God. This, doubtless was the reason why Jacob said, *I have all*. *Gen.* 33. 9. It is translated, *I have enough*, but that was no more than *Esau* said: The *Hebrew* Expression is, *Jeshli-Col*, h. e. *To me there's all*. viz. because of his interest in God. Though a soul should have nothing else, If he hath God, he hath enough, he has *all*. All

outward losses are easily made up in God. Hence our Lord said, There is no man that hath left house, or Brethren, or Sisters, or Father or Mother, or Wife, or Children, or Lands for My sake & the Gospel's, *but he shall recieve an hundred fold now in this time.* Mar. 10. 30. Why! he shall have that Comfort in GOD which all these Creatures could afford, and *a hundred times more.* The Cheif good is eminently *all* good. So that tho a man should loose all his worldly possessions, if he has drawn near to God, he may truly say, I have lost nothing: he may stand upon the ruins of the whole world, and say I have lost nothing. And therefore may rejoice in all afflictive Changes and Bereavements. *Hab.* 3. 17. 18. *Although the fig tree shall not blossome neither shall fruit be in the vine, the labour of the Olive shall fail, and the field shall yeild no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation.* Observe how full and particular the Prophet's Expressions are: here is the Fig tree, and the Olive tree, and the Vine, and the Field, and the Flock, and the herd, if one of these should fail, relief might be hoped for from another of them; nay, Nay but, saith he, though they should *all* fail

fail, though all creatures in the world ſhould fail, God will never fail, and there's Comfort enough in that: happineſs is in the Fruition of *HIM.*

3. *To draw near to god, is the way to be delivered from evil.* The NAME of the LORD is a ſtrong Tower which the Righteous run into and are ſafe. In evil Times *God is good to Iſrael.* Let what will happen in the world, they that draw near to him are ſafe. The Wiſeman ſaith, *ſurely I know that it ſhall go well with them that fear God.* Eccleſ. 8. 12. Such as are very careful to walk with God, do ſometimes experience wonderful Temporal Preſervations: As we ſee in *Noah*, unto whom God ſaid, *Come thou and all thine houſe into the Ark, for thee have I ſeen righteous before me in this generation.* And in the Prophet *Jeremie*, whoſe very life was ſtruck *at* & ſought *after*, and that by the great Ones of the world, but *God hid him*: he appeared for *God*, and *God* appeared for him. So He does often for his ſervants that keep in with Him. He is to them a very preſent Help in the time of Trouble. He ſhall hide them in the ſecret of his Preſence from the pride of men, and keep them ſecretly in a Pavillion from the ſtrife of tongues. However they ſhall have *Spi-*

ritual

ſpiritual Preſervations: The Lord will deliver them from every evil work, and will preſerve them to his heavenly Kingdom. And if a Chriſtian be grieved with inward, perplexing Thoughts, by drawing near to *God*, he may obtain help againſt them. This was the caſe of the *Pſalmiſt*. as the Context ſheweth: he was *almoſt gone*: his unbelieving thoughts had like to have been too hard for him: but he went into the Sanctuary, and there by drawing nigh to God in prayer, and hearing of His Word, he got the victory over his Temptations, and a further Eſtabliſhment in the wayes of God. All his Temptations iſſued in this, that he was made more ſenſible of his own infirmity, and had a more clear Diſcovery of Divine grace. This did he get by drawing near to *GOD*.

4. *Communion with God, is a moſt ſweet and comfortable thing to a gracious ſoul.* Indeed Unregenerate men do not think ſo, becauſe they never had Experience of it, but they that know what comunion with God meanes, have found Sweetneſs and Delight therein which cannot be expreſſed. Hence *David* could ſay, *One day in Thy* Courts, *is better than a thouſand elſe-where. Pſal.* 84. 10. Excellent was the Reply of a Noble Proteſtant, when the

the Papists tempted him with offers of money to forsake the Truth, and to turn Papist, *Let that man's money perish with him, that does not prize one hours Communion with God, above all the gold and silver in the world.* Communion with God in hearing his Word is sweet. Hence the Church saith of Christ, *His mouth is most sweet*, Cant. 5. 16. When a Promise is set home upon the soul by the Spirit of God, how sweet is it! Or, when a man has been in great doubts and darkness about his spiritual estate, or concerning his way and Duty, but some word of God does enlighten and direct him, how sweet is it! what refreshing does his soul within him find! *The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart, sweeter also than the honey and the honey comb.* Psal. 19. 8, 10. And Communion with God in *Prayer* is sweet, *Isai.* 56. 7. *I will make them joyful in my house of prayer.* Some of God's Children have found that Joy & Comfort therein, as to make them forget their outward Afflictions. A holy man once having buried a Child who was dear to him, after he had gone and poured out his soul before God in secret, was chearful, an intimate Friend enquirng the reason, he gave this Answer, *I could be content to bury a child*

every

every day, on condition that I might meet with as much of God every day as I have done this day.

5. *The ſoul that draweth near to God, is* bet-terd *thereby.* Many times conſolation followes thereon, but if not, that which is better than Comfort h. e. More Holineſs is the fruit of ſincere approaches unto God. Never any man did draw nigh to God after a right manuer but he was the more holy for it. The more Communion men have with GOD, the leſs Communion they will have with Sin. Every Act of real Communion with God tends to mortification of ſin. This is one reaſon why the Saints in glory become *impeccable.* The *Beatifical Viſion* makes them that they cannot ſin. The more intimacy of Communion with God any ſoul ſhall attain unto, the more like will he be to God. Amongſt men, he that ſhall converſe much with another, will be apt to be like to him, and to drink in ſomething of his ſpirit with whom he holds a free and familiar Converſation; So they that converſe much with God, will ſurely become more like to him than what can be ſaid of any other men. When *Moſes* had near and intimate Communion with God in the mount, Divine Impreſſions were left upon his face: So are there upon the face of that

ſoul which ſhall be much in Communion with God. 2. *Cor.* 3. 18. *Beholding as in a glaſs the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the ſame image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

6. *All the Saints of God have found it good for them to draw near to Him.* So that Univerſal Experience proves the Truth of my Doctrine: As tis ſaid in Job. *To which of the* Saints *wilt thou turn thee?* So I ſay, ask any of them whether it be not ſo, and they will every one of them anſwer and ſay as the *Pſalmiſt* heroe does, *It is good for mee to draw near to God.* Enquire of them, You have been at the Lord's Table, but did you ever find it good to be there? they'le ſay, we have met with *God* there, and we never met with him, but we found it good for us. Enquire again, Have you not found it good to draw near to God in the word and prayer? and they will give the ſame Anſwer. Some of them have ſpent many whole dayes in ſecret prayer to God, and ſome of theſe have they found to be like *dayes of Heaven.* How has the great God condeſcended to reveal Himſelf to His ſervants after a wonderful manner, when drawing near to Him in that Duty! It is related

related concerning that eminent Saint Mr. *Brewen*, that not long before his death, he had ſuch enlargements in his Cloſet-Duty as made him wholly regardleſs of this lower world. Once when his near Relation told him ſhe feared he had injured himſelf by his riſing ſo early, he replyed, "If you had ſeen "ſuch glorious things as I ſaw this morning "in private praer with God, you would not "have ſaid ſo; for they were ſo wonder-"ful and unſpeakable, that whether I was "in the body, or out of the body with *Paul* "I cannot tell. This indeed was extraordi-nary: But where is there a godly man, but he can truly ſay, he hath found that of God in Secret Prayer which he would not be with-out for all this world? And if we could ſpeak with the Saints in glory, They would every one of them ſay *It is good for me to draw near to God.* As *Peter* ſaid when he ſaw Chriſt transfigured on the holy Mount, *It is good for us to be here.* So do the Saints in heaven ſay, Here we have our fill of Communion with God, It is good for us to be here. This is the *Heaven of Heaven* it ſelf. A life of un-interrupted Communion with God, that's Heaven. *Phil.* 1. 23. *To be with Chriſt which is far better.* There's marvellous Rhetoric in that expreſſion: [*pollo mallon kreiſton*] *It is much*

much more better: The Apoſtle uſeth Comparative upon Comparative, which riſeth higher than the ſuperlative degree. Nothing is better, nothing is ſo good as to live a life of everlaſting Communion with God and with Jeſus Chriſt. One well ſaith, that *The Saints in glory are alwayes experienting, and yet ever learning this Truth to Eternity.*

USE. 1. *It is matter of heart-bleeding Lamentation, that there are ſo few who draw near to God.* Alas, how many are there that content themſelves to live in a ſtate of eſtrangement from God! They are Aliens to the Life of God, yea to a life of Communion with Him. The natural man knoweth not what it is to have Communion with God: All our Communion with God in this World is in ſome Ordinance or other, either Prayer, or Meditation, or Hearing the Word, or Reading, or in ſome other Ordinance, but are not theſe neglected? Church-Fellowſhip and the Lord's Supper are Divine inſtitutions: It is lamentable to conſider that ſo many of the riſing Generation, do neither prize nor prepare themſelvs for ſuch enjoyments, they ſin grievouſly againſt the hope of their Fathers. For our Fathers came into this Wilderneſs for no other end, but only that ſo they might build

build a Sanctuary for the Name of God, and enjoy Communion with Him therein. Now that their Children after them ſhould ſo many of them be careleſs about things of this Nature, is a Lamentation and ſhall be for a Lamentation. And are there not more than a few, that live in the neglect of prayer? Ah ungodly ſouls! The Scripture ſaith, *every one that is godly ſhall pray.* Pſal. 32. 6. He then that liveth without prayer, has no godlineſs, no grace in his ſoul. Are there not ſome that don't ſo much as pray in their Families? Men may make excuſes for ſuch neglects if they will, but there is a Scripture which falls upon them like a Thunderbolt of Death, and they cannot eſcape it, I mean that in *Jer.* 10. 25. *Pour out thy fury upon --- the Families which call not on Thy Name.* If there be a prayerleſs Family in *Boſton*, if there be a prayerleſs Family in *New-England* (as alas there are many) let them look to it, for the Fury of the Almighty is ready to be poured out upon them. Others there are who neglect Cloſet Prayer. Verily, I cannot ſee how ſuch a man can have the true fear of God in his heart, that does in his ordinary Courſe live a whole day together without ſecret Communion with God.

USE. 2. For Exhortation

Let

Let men yea, let every man *be ſo good to himſelf as to draw near to God.* Conſider the preſent Times call for this. It's a dark and cloudy day: Without doubt there is a gracious day of Mercy & Salvation to the Church of God near at hand. It may from Scripture and Hiſtory be demonſtrated that the *Twelve hundred and ſixty years* allowed for the *Beaſt's* Continuance is almoſt expired. But a little before break of day, how dark is it like to be! Now a child is not affraid though he be in the dark, if his Father has him by the hand. No more need we be afraid of evil Tidings, if we *draw near to GOD.* It is now a great Queſtion, *What ſhall we do that we may be accounted worthy to eſcape thoſe things that are coming on the world?* The beſt Anſwer which I can think of is this, *Let us draw near to* God *and* one another *in the Lord.* And then God will either keep the ſtorm from coming to us, or if it do come, it will but blow us the ſooner to Heaven.

For Direction.

1. *Take heed of ſin.* A great Sin is like a violent blaſt which bloweth the ſoul far from God ſuddenly. Sin and guilt upon the Conſcience makes a man affraid to look God in the face. When *Adam* had ſinned he endeavoured to run away from God, and to hide himſelf

himself (had it bin possible) from His holy presence. Therefore watch against sin. Especially against such sins as will break peace with God, & interrupt Communion with Him. All scandalous Sins will do so; yea, and sins of Infirmity, if they be not mourned for.

2. In all our approaches unto the holy God, *Let us beſure to bring* Jesus Christ *with us*. Let every soul make sure of an Interest in Him, without Whom there is no drawing near to God. When the Law was given at Mount *Sinai*, the people stood *afarr off*: So Christless Sinners who are only concerned in the Covenant of Works, are *afarr off*. The Lord saith to them as sometimes *Joseph* to his Brethren, Except you bring Christ with you, you shall not see my face. And Beleevers must depend upon Christ for all acceptance with God, and that as to *every* Duty. The Apostle speakes of *a better hope by which we draw nigh to God*, *Heb.* 7. 19. what is that *Better Hope* but the priestly Office, the Merit & Mediation of Jesus Christ? were it not for that we should have no hope. How should Sinners come near that God who is a consuming fire, without a Mediator? Christ is is the way, and none can come to the Father but by Him.

Tibi Domine!

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II.

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V.

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